

PAINTED DESERT INN
Navajo Vicinity
Apache County
Arizona

HABS NO. AZ-161

HABS
ARIZ,
1-NAVAJO,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PAINTED DESERT INN

HABS No. AZ-161

HABS,
ARIZ,
1-1976, /
1-

Location: Petrified Forest National Park, Navajo vicinity, Apache County, Arizona.

Significance: The Painted Desert Inn is a pueblo revival structure perched on the rim of the Painted Desert in Arizona's Petrified Forest National Park. In the late 1930s the National Park Service expanded a modest one-story building on the site into a combined restaurant, hotel, trading post, and museum. NPS architect Lyle E. Bennett, influenced by southwestern vernacular architecture, designed the building. In 1947 the Fred Harvey Company, which assumed operation of the concession, brought in its own designer, Mary Colter, to redecorate, and hired Fred Kabotie, a Hopi Indian, to paint murals in the lunch room and dining room.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction: The Painted Desert	2
II.	Early History of the Painted Desert Inn	2
III.	National Park Service Planning and Design	8
IV.	Painted Desert Inn, 1937-1940	11
	The CCC at Petrified Forest National Monument	11
	Construction of the Painted Desert Inn	12
V.	Painted Desert Inn, 1940-1947	25
	Standard Concessions, Inc.	25
	Painted Desert Museum	30
	Painted Desert Inn During World War II	31
	The Inn Reopens	32
VI.	Painted Desert Inn, 1947-1963	34
	Brief History of the Fred Harvey Company	35
	Operation of the Painted Desert Inn	35
VII.	Painted Desert Inn, 1963-1991	46
VIII.	Sources of Information	53
IX.	Project Information	54

I. Introduction: The Painted Desert

It is believed that the Painted Desert was named by Spanish explorer Francisco Vazquez de Coronado, who reportedly called the vast and colorful valley "El Desierto Pintado" while passing through in 1540. The Hopi Indians called the area "Assam-unda," or "country of departed spirits"; the Navajo term was "Halchiitah," or "amidst the colors." Others referred to this part of the Arizona desert as the "bad lands" or "mal pais." Lieut. Ives mentioned the Painted Desert by name in his journals of 1858, and the early U. S. Geological Survey used the name to describe the strata formation. John Wesley Powell wrote: "The marls and soft rocks of the Painted Desert are of many colors, chocolate, red, vermilion, pink, buff, and grey." The name has aroused the interest of travelers, scientists, and entrepreneurs for a century and a half.¹

By Presidential Proclamation No. 697, Theodore Roosevelt established Petrified Forest National Monument on December 8, 1906. The government created the monument to protect the unique landforms and petrified trees in an area south of the Painted Desert. After a number of years the monument attracted tourists by railroad to this remote section of Arizona. Until use of the automobile became more widespread, tourists reached the Petrified Forest via the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway; early visitors to the monument disembarked at Adamana, merely a hotel and depot situated on the Puerco River (Rio Puerco) near the northern edge of the monument. The Painted Desert, an area about 10 miles north of the Puerco River, attracted additional public notice with the completion of U. S. Route 66 in the early 1920s. This two-lane interstate highway followed the rim of the Painted Desert for a number of miles about 20 miles east of Holbrook, Arizona, and 25 miles north of park headquarters at the Rainbow Forest. A number of roadside tourist attractions appeared on Route 66 near the rim, including the Painted Desert Inn which opened in 1924. A large part of the Painted Desert, including the inn, was added to Petrified Forest National Monument in 1932 and 1936.²

II. Early History of the Painted Desert Inn

Herbert David Lore, date and place of birth unknown, built the Painted Desert Inn in 1924. Lore had operated a curio and rock shop in Holbrook in the early 1920s in a building he owned opposite the county courthouse. He was listed in Navajo County's Great Register employed as a "title-man" in 1922 with residence in Holbrook. He married Elva P. Moore some time in the early 1920s, and the couple had two children, Francis and Nellie.³

¹Will C. Barnes, Arizona Place Names, University of Arizona Bulletin No. 2 (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1935), 314, and revision of same by Byrd H. Granger (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1960), 18.

²History of Legislation Related to the National Park System Through the 82d Congress (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1958), II: 1; "Evaluation of Structures and Cultural Resources, Petrified Forest National Park" (MS, Historic Preservation Team, Western Regional Office, December 1974), 11-12.

³Great Register 1922, Navajo County, Navajo County Records Office; Mortgages, 7: 601, Apache County Records Office; interview with Garnette Franklin.

In 1923 or 1924, Lore filed on a homestead in the Painted Desert containing almost 640 acres, including lots 1 and 2 of the south half of the northeast quarter, and the south half of section 4 in Township 19 north, and the southwest quarter of section 34 in Township 20. Upon the latter parcel he constructed the Painted Desert Inn. Lore patented the homestead on April 17, 1931, after establishing compliance with the Homestead Act of 1862 which required development and occupation of the homestead for five continuous years. Lore also purchased Section 3, and contracted for the purchase of Sections 9 and 33, from the Santa Fe Pacific Railroad, reportedly for \$3 per acre.⁴

To build an inn with a trading post and restaurant, H. D. (Herb) Lore chose a sloping site on Kachina Point which afforded a sweeping view of the Painted Desert. The 33' x 63' building had a hip roof and another, smaller building connected to the southwest corner of the building, used as a kitchen, also had a hip roof. The upper floor of the building held a dining room on the north, a lounge, and three bedrooms on the south. Petrified wood pillars supported the south end of the upper floor; a driveway ran beneath the bedrooms. The trading post and several small rooms occupied the space below the lounge, while the north part of the building, due to the slope of the site, was not excavated.

Indian laborers constructed the inn during 1924 with lumber and stone, evidently quarried from two 20-acre placer claims that Lore held nearby, and with petrified wood no doubt taken from Lore's property in the Painted Desert. The stone walls were laid in sandy trenches, using mud for mortar. Some time later Lore "pointed up" the mud joints with the application of sound mortar in the joints, perhaps to patch leaks or to improve the appearance of the building. Lore used six rooms for overnight accommodations, each equipped with two double beds. A lunch counter, trading post, and other rooms composed the main part of the building.

During the next decade Lore also built a frame residence west of the inn (presumably for himself and his family), a stone garage and shop which housed the lighting plant, a stone house which burned shortly after it was completed in 1931, and a stone dormitory for hired help built in 1932. With no water supply available on the rim, Lore hauled water 10 miles from Adamana. According to his own calculations, by 1932 Lore spent \$45,000 for buildings and \$35,000 for the land and other improvements such as roads and trails.⁵

The Lores called their inn "The Stone Tree House," offering dining room service, rooms with views of the Painted Desert, Hopi and Navajo arts and crafts, petrified wood, and other souvenirs to travelers on Highway 66 and the railroad. They claimed that it was the only house in the world made of petrified wood: "its walls are some eighty million years old!" read their brochure. The downstairs lobby of the inn had petrified wood finish work on the bar and supporting pillars, and featured what Lore claimed was the largest "Sand Painting" Navajo blanket in existence: "[it was] made by one Navajo squaw and was many years in the loom being woven." Lore himself was referred to as "The

⁴Patents 4: 42, Apache County Records Office; Roger Toll [Report to The Director, National Park Service, about the Painted Desert] (March 31, 1932), 24.

⁵Toll to Director, 24-28; Lorimer H. Skidmore, "Report to the Chief of Planning on Construction of the Painted Desert Inn, Petrified Forest National Monument, Holbrook, Arizona" (MS, Branch of Plans and Design, National Park Service, Washington, January 4, 1939), 2, 5.

Desert Philosopher" by the monument superintendent, Charles J. Smith, who also took time to praise Lore's "charming wife" in his monthly report.⁶

On May 15, 1928, Herbert and Elva P. Lore incorporated a business, the activities or result of which is not known. The Lores called their corporation "Diamond L Ranches, Inc." Herbert Lore acted as president, F. M. Blackwell of Holbrook served as vice president, and Mrs. Lore held the offices of secretary and treasurer; she also acted as her husband's attorney-in-fact. According to the company's somewhat optimistic Articles of Incorporation, the company would "deal in horses, mules, cattle, sheep, hogs and other livestock," and invest in mines, timbering, real estate and personal property, and water development. Also, they would "construct, erect, equip, repair and improve houses, buildings, public roads, alleys, tramways, railroads, reservoirs, irrigation ditches, wharves, sewers, tunnels, conduits and subways," and "perform and carry out contracts for constructing . . . and improving buildings of every sort and kind." Diamond L Ranches would also carry on a general merchandise and manufacturing business, and "deal in and exchange hotels, apartment houses, cafes, garages and all things incidental thereto." The partners authorized capital stock of \$50,000 of 500 shares; Article X of the incorporation documents deemed all of the Lores' personal property exempt from any debts incurred by the corporation, with Lore appointed as statutory agent. Apparently the Lores lived at the Painted Desert Inn at this time. To what extent the business was consummated is unknown.⁷

Lore built a road from the monument's new Rio Puerco bridge near Adamana to the Painted Desert Inn in 1931, attracting more park visitors in their private vehicles as well as travelers on the Santa Fe Railroad. According to the monument's custodian, Lore's road was at times in much better condition than the park road, an uncomfortable situation for the rangers who were "not expected to recommend one road at the expense of the other." Lore also constructed a 5- to 6-mile rim drive through his property which took visitors to a number of scenic overlooks. He built a trail from the inn to the desert floor, where he kept an automobile and provided a two-hour tour of the attractions of the Painted Desert, a trip that he claimed "opens virgin territory." According to Lore about 4,400 people walked the trail from the inn to the desert floor in 1931; the previous year approximately 70,000 persons visited the site.⁸

Roger W. Toll, a National Park Service planner in the Denver office, described the Painted Desert Inn as it appeared in 1932:

The main building has six rooms, with two double beds each, or a maximum capacity of 24. A few rooms can be made available in

⁶Brochure for Painted Desert Inn, 1931, Petrified Forest National Park (hereafter, PEFO); B. B. Craig to Commissioner, General Land Office, May 7, 1931 (in Toll to Director, 41); Superintendent's Monthly Report for February 1931, PEFO.

⁷Articles of Incorporation filed May 31, 1928, at the Arizona Corporation Commission in Phoenix, Incorporations 3: 102-105, Navajo County Records Office, Holbrook.

⁸Toll to Director, 27, 39; Superintendent's Monthly Report for May 1932; Brochure for Painted Desert Inn, 1931, PEFO. Lore's visitation figures appear to be inflated.

other buildings so that thirty or more people can be accommodated. The rates for lodging are \$2.50 for one in a room, or \$4.00 for four in a room. Meals are furnished at customary prices.

The main building is built partly of stone, and petrified wood has been used extensively in its construction.

In addition to his main building, there is a frame residence, also a stone residence which burned last summer soon after being completed and which Mr. Lore says he plans to rebuild this year. A stone dormitory for help has been begun. There is also a stone garage and shop, which houses the lighting plant.

At present all water used is hauled from Adamana, some 10 miles distant. Mr. Lore says that water can be pumped 300 feet from a well on the Painted Desert, but that it is "sweet" and not suitable for drinking purposes.⁹

The National Park Service looked at the Painted Desert and Painted Desert Inn in early 1931 with an idea of expanding the park into that area. Of utmost concern was the fate of the Black Forest, site of the only deposits of black petrified wood consisting of the oldest tree form, *Schilderia*. Collectors and entrepreneurs were ransacking the Black Forest for petrified wood at an alarming rate. People commonly trespassed onto Lore's and others' properties, taking wood to be sold out of roadside shacks along Route 66. The superintendent of the monument, Charles J. Smith, complained that visitors were often misled into believing that they had seen the national monument by visiting these roadside attractions, and the easy availability of the roadside stands and Lore's tours into the Black Forest were siphoning potential park visitors as well as depleting the wood in the area. "In many cases," Smith wrote, "there are several tons [of petrified wood] scattered around these shanties . . . nearly all of this petrified wood has been taken from the Black Forest." Lore claimed to have built fences to keep trespassers out, only to have them torn down. In one incident, Lore was fired upon after discovering two men skinning a poached steer on his property.¹⁰

Smith also expressed concern about Lore's expanding operations at Painted Desert Inn. Smith wrote to the director of the National Park Service that Lore had "begun in earnest to commercialize the Black Forest, advertising it extensively, and running trips by auto into the heart of the forest . . . when one has paid admission to such an area and carried away free wood as a souvenir, that person does not care to visit the Monument."¹¹ B. B. Craig, a representative of the General Land Office in Santa Fe, visited the Painted Desert in January 1931 and reported that Lore was interested in selling or exchanging the land with the government, "in order that it could be preserved and protected." Lore reportedly expressed concern about all of the petrified wood being carried off, even though he

⁹Toll to Director, 27-28.

¹⁰Charles J. Smith to the Director, National Park Service, June 8, 1931 (in Toll to Director, 45-48).

¹¹Smith to Director.

was in business processing and selling the material. Craig described the Painted Desert Inn as "a very beautiful building . . . admired by everyone visiting the Painted Desert."¹²

The Arizona legislature passed a memorial in 1931 requesting that approximately 36 square miles of the Painted Desert be added to Petrified Forest National Monument. Numerous suggestions came forth, including a proposal from the National Park Service's assistant director Conrad Wirth proposing 270 square miles that included two-and-a-half townships in the Indian Reservation. In a letter to the director of the National Park Service dated March 21, 1932, and accompanied by a report illustrated with maps and photographs, Park Service planner Roger W. Toll recommended purchase of 103 square miles of the Painted Desert for inclusion in Petrified Forest National Monument. Arizona Senator Carl Hayden had asked that the proposed size be reduced, which Toll did by 36 square miles, although Toll argued that other cuts would be inadvisable as the area was of "national interest." He noted that the land had little value for grazing; 32 percent of the land was in the public domain, 10 percent State of Arizona, 35 percent owned by Santa Fe Railroad and 23 percent privately owned in three major holdings. Toll praised the Painted Desert after an extensive tour of the area (accompanied at times by Herb Lore), writing that "at no place that I know of is the coloring as brilliant as in the area under consideration." A major attraction of the Painted Desert was the Black Forest, containing, according to Toll, "the most abundant petrified wood that I know of in the United States."¹³

No doubt part of the attraction of the area to Toll was the existence of the Painted Desert Inn. Toll enclosed a number of photographs of the building in his report, pointing out the construction with petrified wood and the views availed from the location. Lore's property provided "the most desirable land for a general view of the Painted Desert . . . in three directions." Comparing Lore's overlook to El Tovar at the Grand Canyon, Toll strongly urged that Lore's property be included in the proposed addition. Lore apparently told Toll that he was no longer interested in continuing operation of the Painted Desert Inn and would not accept a franchise if the land was sold to the government. Lore owned or controlled four square miles or 2,560 acres, most of which lay in the proposed boundaries.¹⁴

Congress expanded the monument on September 23, 1932, with the addition of 53,300 acres of the Painted Desert. Lore's property, however, was not included in the early land transactions. Monument staff hurriedly constructed a checking station at the rim at Route 66, providing a crucial element for inviting travelers into the monument from the highway. The new road from the highway south to the monument was being surveyed at the time, and would be constructed within a year. Travel to the monument increased by 100 percent after the checking station and the new Rio Puerco bridge were completed, no doubt because of the new park areas and improved access. By July 1933,

¹²Craig to Commissioner (in Toll to Director, 41).

¹³Toll to Director, 2.

¹⁴Toll to Director, 2, 26.

twice as many tourists checked in at the Painted Desert section than had visited the original Petrified Forest.¹⁵

The increase in visitors brought more business to Lore, and perhaps more headaches as well. After a number of complaints were lodged at the park about the condition of the rim road, Lore cooperated with monument staff in repairing the road. Lore provided four laborers, three of whom were Navajos, and the park provided a truck and driver for eighteen days. The road was put into "first class shape" for the spring and summer seasons. The Painted Desert section received a permanent man in charge on May 1, 1933, when Acting Chief Ranger Frank J. Winess moved into an old shack that had been moved to the rim from Agate Bridge.¹⁶

Part of Lore's business involved the processing and sale of petrified wood. A polishing plant at the Painted Desert Inn produced items for sale from wood presumably taken off Lore's land. On June 18, 1935, Frank Baumbach, Lore's wood processor, was observed taking about a ton and a half of petrified wood from park property. Baumbach was charged in Holbrook and tried by a U. S. Grand Jury at Prescott, Arizona, on August 28. While the park felt that it had a solid case against Baumbach, having matched a piece of a petrified log found in the park and one found at the Painted Desert Inn, the case was closed without a conviction. Superintendent Smith wrote, "the evidence was sufficient and fairly presented, but the impression seemed to be that the penalty which might be inflicted was too severe, and that the defendant was the tool of another party." Whether Smith was referring to Herbert Lore remains speculative.¹⁷

The National Park Service finally purchased most of Lore's Painted Desert property, including the Painted Desert Inn, on February 29, 1936, for \$69,400. Apparently at this time the original Painted Desert Inn closed for business and Lore departed. Superintendent Smith wrote in his monthly report that "with the completion of the proposed development at Painted Desert, this Monument is bound to become one of the most popular and interesting units of the National Park Service." Grantors Herbert D. Lore, E. B. Lore, and Diamond L Ranches, Inc., conveyed all of Section 3 and parts of Section 4 in Township 19, and all of Section 33 and the southwest quarter of Section 34, containing the Painted Desert Inn. The Department of the Interior accepted the deed on July 23, 1936, and, forecasting 200,000 annual visitors to the Painted Desert, immediately went to work preparing to develop this significant addition to the park.¹⁸

¹⁵Rogers, History of Legislation, II: 2; Superintendent's Monthly Reports for October and November 1932, February and July 1933, PEFO.

¹⁶Superintendent's Monthly Reports for March and May 1933.

¹⁷Superintendent's Monthly Reports for June, July, and August 1935.

¹⁸Some time after leaving the Painted Desert Inn, Lore took up occupancy in a shack near Highway 63 (the Painted Desert rim road) on his 674-acre inholding near Lacey Point overlooking the Painted Desert. In December 1940 he began construction on a house approximately 100 yards from the road. A resurvey of inholding boundaries found Lore's house to be in the park, and the park's pump road to be on Lore's property. By March 1946 Lore had died, apparently at his home at South Mountain Park near Phoenix. His two grown children, Francis Lore and Nellie Mayo, inherited Lore's entire estate, mainly consisting of property around Arizona, including the inholding at Lacey Point. Lore's children at first were unwilling to sell to the National Park Service at \$8.00 per acre, but eventually sold the parcel in 1957. Lore's section was one of the last inholdings to be brought into the park (Superintendent's Monthly Report, November and December 1940, October 1941, and March and July 1946; Notices Affecting Real Estate, 5: 200-203, Apache County Records Office;

III. National Park Service Planning and Design

Monies for land purchase and development of the Painted Desert section came from Public Works Administration funds that had been earmarked in January 1936 (Advice No. 2634). Of the \$133,500 total, almost half paid for the land; the remainder was slated for and spent on improvements including well drilling, water and sewer development, pumps, and miscellaneous expenditures. For the Painted Desert Inn, the cost of materials, millwork, a large storage shed, and a \$10,748 heating and ventilating contract would total about \$28,000.¹⁹

The National Park Service considered the top priorities to be redevelopment of the rim road and use of the Painted Desert Inn as a visitor resource. The service's chief architect, Thomas C. Vint, and landscape architects Charles A. Richey of the Region Three office in Santa Fe and Alfred Kuehl of Grand Canyon National Park, had begun the planning process even before the land transaction had been accepted. In mid-1936 these men visited the park to inspect the Painted Desert development area and to formulate plans. Superintendent Smith accompanied National Park Service architect Lorimer H. Skidmore and an associate as they made measurements and gathered data for the working drawings. It became evident to these men that funding would not be forthcoming for a project involving demolition and new construction, but that renovation, stabilization, and expansion of the existing inn, utilizing a entirely new design, would most likely gain Washington's support.

The building's design was the work of Region Three associate architect Lyle E. Bennett. Besides designing the building itself, Bennett worked out the finer details such as patterns and coloring on the floors, furniture design, decoration of the skylight panes, and the overall paint schemes. Bennett came to the National Park Service with a degree in fine arts from the University of Missouri, where his major field had been architecture. In the 1930s he designed structures and furniture at Bandelier National Monument, as well as buildings at Carlsbad Caverns, White Sands National Monument, and Mesa Verde. Historian Laura Soullière Harrison interviewed Bennett in 1985, and wrote of him in the National Historic Landmark nomination:

Although his admitted architectural preferences were along the modern lines of Frank Lloyd Wright he set those interests aside in the fine pueblo revival buildings he designed for the park service. His command of that southwestern idiom was masterful. His design for the skylight came from years of careful study of prehistoric pottery that he restored at Mesa Verde and that he read about in publications of the University of New Mexico. He studied ceiling structure in pueblo-revival buildings in New Mexico. His sensitivity for colors came from his artistic training at the University of Missouri. His abilities to combine those finer elements of design with simple

files, PEFO). Deeds 23: 481-482, Apache County Records Office; Superintendent's Monthly Reports for July and September 1936.

¹⁹Skidmore, 2.

building materials to create impressive architectural spaces was a product of experience and talent.²⁰

In August 1936 Bennett prepared preliminary drawings for a remodeled Painted Desert Inn at the Region Three office. From October to December Bennett and two helpers from Washington completed the final working drawings and specifications for contractors. Consisting of thirteen sheets entitled, "Alterations and Additions to Lodge at Painted Desert, Petrified Forest National Monument, Holbrook Arizona," the drawings were approved and dated January 15, 1937, under the number NM-PF/3100-D. C. W. Andrae in the Planning Office in Washington prepared the mechanical drawings and mechanical sections of the specifications, which were intended for a single contract.²¹

The drawings showed a twenty-eight-room, two-story building patterned after native architecture found throughout the southwest, although particularly prominent in New Mexico. Supervising Architect Lorimer H. Skidmore described the Pueblo/Spanish style of the Painted Desert Inn during its construction:

The architectural style of this building is influenced by the dwellings of the Pueblo Indians. A softening and decorative touch of early Spanish is introduced by the use of adzed beams and carved corbels and brackets. Windows, doors, and frames are sandblasted. The ceilings, excepting in utility rooms, are framed of local Ponderosa Pine "vigas" (beams) exposed in rooms across which are placed split and whole aspen savinos in Indian fashion, [which] form the finished ceilings. The three coat lime plaster walls are finished with a lime putty finish. Floors are flagstone or concrete, excepting those in the Trading Post room, Lunch room, and Kitchen, which are of wood.

The building presents a very pleasing appearance from the exterior and blends harmoniously with the surroundings. It is entirely "in character" being located in the heart of the Hopi, Navajo, and Zuni Indian country. The plan arrangement is excellent from both the Government and operators standpoint.²²

The building would be divided into two areas, a government-operated section and a concessioner's area. The former had an information room, two museum rooms and public toilets. The main entry to the building from the parking lot led the visitor to the information room, and double doors from this room led to the operator's section to be leased to a concessioner. This portion of the building, the largest, included on the upper floor a trading post room with large doors and a porch overlooking the Painted Desert, a lunch room, dining room, and kitchen; on the lower floor a "refreshment room"

²⁰Laura Soullière Harrison, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory -- Nomination Form: Painted Desert Inn" (MS, National Park Service, Southwest Regional Office, 1986), 8-3.

²¹Superintendent's Monthly Report for June 1936; Skidmore, 5.

²²Skidmore, 4-5.

or the tap room, a laundry room, linen closet and two large storage rooms, a boiler room with work area, six small "guest rooms" with sinks and fireplaces, and two shower and toilet rooms for the occupants of the private rooms. Bennett's plans re-used existing walls, which today form the tap room and its adjacent rooms, the store room, and the laundry on the basement level, and the trading post, lunch room and kitchen on the first floor. The building was heated and ventilated with thirty-six steam radiators connected to a steam-operated unit heater, a "vacuum return" type system with a low-pressure oil-fired boiler, and two gravity-type ventilating duct systems and exhaust duct systems. Provisions were made for telephone and radio installations, and for an electrically operated dumbwaiter from the basement hallway to the kitchen.²³

As Public Works Administration Federal Project No. 669, Contract No. I-1P 5664, the building project was advertised for bids, which the government received on March 15, 1937. All of the bids exceeded the amount budgeted and were rejected. With the possibility that the funds would be rescinded if not spent soon, regional and park managers made a decision to use labor, both skilled and unskilled, from the Civilian Conservation Corps camp that had been established at Rainbow Forest in the southern part of the National Monument. In this way, all money could be expended on materials, with the exception of the \$10,000 heating and ventilating work by contract. Specifications for this job were advertised for bids beginning on April 2, 1937. Charles A. Schiemann of Chicago was awarded the contract in June, for the sum of \$10,748. Schiemann would be required to begin work within ten days after being notified to proceed by superintendent Smith.²⁴

The Branch of Plans and Design in Washington prepared lists of the materials needed and the Purchasing Office drew up eight separate contracts covering: 1) linoleum and similar material; 2) paint materials; 3) cement, gravel, etc.; 4) reinforcing steel; 5) hardware; 6) plumbing materials and tools; 7) electrical materials and tools; and 8) timber, pipe covering, and roofing material. The contracts, totalling about \$14,600, were awarded to twenty-nine different companies with an approximate delivery date to the job site set at July 15, 1937. As the need arose, additional materials would be purchased with CCC camp funds.²⁵

IV. Painted Desert Inn, 1937-1940

CCC at Petrified Forest National Monument

²³Skidmore, 3-4, 8-9.

²⁴Skidmore, 5-6, 8.

²⁵Skidmore, 6-7.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt came to the White House in the midst of the Great Depression, where unemployment stood at more than 25 percent and Herbert Hoover's relief programs had failed. Roosevelt took over the presidency in 1933, bringing with him a background in conservation and reforestation projects that he had promoted in his home state of New York. Roosevelt immediately proposed a temporary 250,000-man conservation organization that would work on projects on federal and national park lands. So forceful was the president that his proposal, the Federal Unemployment Relief Act, was signed into law on March 31, 1933, just weeks after taking office. By executive order 6101 the President's Emergency Conservation Work (ECW), later and best known as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), was put into operation on April 5, 1933, with Robert Fechner in charge. Roosevelt's goal, to put a quarter million unemployed young men to work by July 1, was met in what has been called the "greatest peacetime mobilization of American youth" that the country had seen.²⁶

The CCC recruited single men, age 18 to 25, from families in need of relief. Each man was required to send \$25 of their monthly \$30 stipend to their families. In return they would be fed, clothed and housed, and given work in what was usually a scenic part of the country. The young men were first given fitness training by military personnel, then assigned to 200-man camps, usually in a national park or developing state park area. When it became apparent that the president's goal could not be met by recruiting only younger men, the criteria was changed to include veterans of World War I, men by this time in their 30s and 40s. By October 1933, hundreds of camps, including 102 in national parks and monuments, were in operation, their men performing jobs ranging from tree thinning and fire prevention to installing water systems and building roads. At Petrified Forest National Monument, the CCC would be involved in a unique and memorable project in the rebuilding of the Painted Desert Inn.

CCC Camp NM-1-A was established in October 1934 at the Rainbow Forest adjacent to the monument headquarters, after initially being camped at Rio Puerco the previous May. One year after work on the Painted Desert Inn was commenced and at the request of the camp superintendent, the camp was moved to the Rio Puerco area, about 9 miles from the jobsite, and renamed Camp NM-2 (later NP-8-A).²⁷

CCC camp superintendent Harold W. Cole wrote, forty years later, of some of the challenges to be found at Petrified Forest:

The various agencies that provided projects for the employment of the enrollees employed civilian supervisors to direct work activities. These supervisors, a Superintendent, Engineer, Architect, Foremen of various trades, etc. were to train the enrollees in the use of tools, how to accomplish work and to do it in a safe manner. The combination of youth with generally no work experience and a foreman used to

²⁶John C. Paige, The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942 - An Administrative History (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1985), 1-15.

²⁷Harold W. Cole to Superintendent David Ames (June 5, 1976), 6; Harold J. Brodrick, "A History of Petrified Forest National Monument" (MS, National Park Service, 1955), 32.

handling able men presented many problems. The projects planned for Petrified Forest offered a variety of interesting work to a greater degree than any other camp in the West. To the enrollees that came to us from South Philadelphia, the Park was a wild, desolate place beyond anything they had imagined, a frightening change from city streets. Also they had never seen a tool such as a saw, hammer, chisel, or pick and shovel. Had I not handled these problems for two years prior to this assignment I would have believed that accomplishment of any building project, let alone the [Painted Desert] Inn, would have been impossible. However, my main problems lay with the foremen, to teach them to be patient teachers, fair and firm disciplinarians, to walk tall.²⁸

Cole had been assigned to Camp NM-1-A in October 1936, where he supervised a number of projects in the park. These included road construction in the Blue Mesa area, building a ranger residence and major water system that involved construction of a well, pump system, 12-mile pipeline and concrete reservoir, as well as landscaping and erosion control projects. A three-month snowstorm from December to March virtually halted all work until spring 1937. That spring Cole was informed that the Painted Desert Inn job would be performed by his CCC crew.²⁹

Construction of the Painted Desert Inn

Near the end of May 1937, the Painted Desert Rim Road and the inn were closed for construction, for a period to last five months for the road but more than three years for the Painted Desert Inn. Crews under the supervision of the Bureau of Public Roads improved Lore's old rim route by regrading it and installing proper drainage and reinforcement at a cost of \$52,000. By August a layer of crushed rock had been laid and a final oil surface was applied in early October. The 4.8-mile road reopened to the public on October 15, 1937, while construction of the new Painted Desert Inn was still in its early stages.³⁰

After a flurry of planning conferences and site inspections, work officially began on the Painted Desert Inn on May 12, 1937. Under the jurisdiction of the Third Regional Office in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Lorimer H. Skidmore acted as the supervising architect. Skidmore, an assistant architect in the Branch of Plans and Design in Washington, D.C., led the project for the National Park Service, although the overall responsibility during the construction period rested with the monument's long-time superintendent, Charles H. Smith. The laborers were supervised directly in their day-to-day tasks by CCC superintendent Harold W. Cole, assigned to Petrified Forest National Monument in spring 1936 after two years as a CCC superintendent in the Tucson area. Cole assured Superintendent Smith and others involved that his CCC crew was capable of the work if professional

²⁸Cole to Ames, 3.

²⁹Cole to Ames, 5-6.

³⁰Superintendent's Monthly Reports for May, August, September, and October 1937; Skidmore, 2.

masons were hired. He also indicated that the project would no doubt move slowly at times because of the seasonal need to train new enrollees. Cole suggested that the CCC camp be moved to the Puerco River site nearer to the Painted Desert projects.³¹

The CCC force was broken down into specialist crews, each with a foreman. John P. Swanson acted as the general foreman. Swanson came to the job with no particular trade, but was praised by supervising architect Skidmore as "an excellent foreman . . . the best and most interested worker on the job." Swanson initially supervised excavation, timber and pole installations, and concrete work. Swanson was in charge of the ornamental work during the last phase of construction, in which his crew crafted light fixtures, painted the skylight panes with their intricate designs, painted the walls and furniture, and installed display panels in the museum. Patrick H. Finn supervised quarrying of building stone and flagstone, and guided the dangerous work of underpinning and strengthening the stone walls. With past experience as a miner, Finn was an expert at excavation, tunneling, and heavy bracing. Thomas S. Close, carpentry foreman, led his crew in building forms, installing structural timbers, vigas, and savinos, as well as window and door framing, flooring, display cabinets, and furniture. John H. Cole, an elderly stone mason (no relation to CCC superintendent Cole), worked during the second year of construction laying flagstone walks; Cole's crew also assisted in carpentry. Robert Duff supervised maintenance of the trucks and equipment and, as a skilled ironworker, fabricated many tools including hoisting equipment, levers, log trailers, and sandblasters. Superintendent Cole later wrote that "the ability of Mr. Duff to maintain the equipment we had and to design and fabricate a special tool item was one of the reasons we were able to complete the work."³²

Cole later wrote of how each day was organized: "Generally, a discussion of work to the point of understanding what was required was carried on with the staff. Following this, each man was permitted to operate in a manner best suited to his capabilities, subject to daily inspection of the progress and safety of the enrollees." An immediate problem arose in the distance from the CCC camp at Rainbow Forest to the job site. Ten to fifteen hours per week per man were used in traveling the 25-mile distance over narrow, winding park roads. This would be solved the next year with the construction of a new camp at Puerco River, less than 10 miles from the job. Also, water for drinking and construction had to be hauled from the Puerco pump house, using a great deal of time and labor. The completion of the Painted Desert water system in October 1937, relieved this problem.³³

Skidmore reportedly clashed at times with Bennett and others; he was characterized by one man who worked closely with him as "a construction oriented architect, not of the [NPS type] that combines an empathy with environment as demonstrated by MRSS. Bennett, Keuhl, Sias, et al. . . . This condition resulted in differences [sic] of opinion between concern for authenticity of design features and 'let's get the job done and get out of this place'. . . ." So, Skidmore spent his time with

³¹Skidmore, 12; Cole to Ames, 5-6. Charles J. Smith acted as custodian and then superintendent of the monument from 1929 to 1940.

³²Cole to Ames, 2, 7; Skidmore, 20.

³³Skidmore, 9, 14.

the practical details of construction, while Bennett and the others handled the more artistic design features such as coloring, motifs and shapes.³⁴

After consultation with officials in Santa Fe, Skidmore reported to Superintendent Smith on May 6, 1937. Work began on May 12 with the construction of a large wood-frame storage building for incoming construction materials. This sturdy structure, 25' wide and 96' long, was divided into eight bays, each 12' by 25'. One bay was divided with a partition and used as an office and tool room. The floors were gravel except for a wood floor in the office/tool room. Twelve windows in swinging wood casements were built by CCC enrollees. PWA funds totalling \$1,111.13 covered most of the cost for the shed, while an additional \$116.53 in CCC funds provided for paneling the office, construction and installation of two large sliding doors, and completion of the tool room. Most of the construction materials arrived by August and were placed in the storage building. In addition to the storage building, other construction projects in the immediate vicinity of the inn included three residences for park staff (two of which were built to imitate the Painted Desert Inn, both of which survive), a utility building measuring 30' by 60' to house three electric generators for the area and three vehicles, and a gas station to be operated by the concessioners of the inn.³⁵

After some preliminary work by masonry foreman Finn, three skilled stone masons, including St. Johns contractor Roland Jones, set to work in May strengthening and replacing walls in the building. The north end of the building, an overhanging wood-frame room supported by petrified wood pillars, was removed and its picturesque pillars toppled. CCC enrollees performed the work of quarrying, preparing and hauling building stone to the site, as well as excavating and screening sand for mortar from local washes. They worked as assistants to the skilled masons, and were eventually taught to cut stone and lay up walls. The three masons were employed through December.³⁶

The system used for strengthening walls was both time-consuming and dangerous, as the walls as constructed by H. D. Lore had been found to be mostly unsound. Under the guidance of Cole and Finn, workers excavated around the base of the walls, a section at a time, then built foundations and replacement sections of wall. In some places a hole was cut into the existing roof overhang through which workers gained access to the wall top and poured concrete. The Superintendent's Monthly Report for the first month of construction noted that a "large passageway had to be excavated under a very delicate part of the building . . . [but] all danger had passed by end of May." Supervising Architect Skidmore described the wall stabilization work, what he called "surgical operations," in his 1938 construction report:

A great amount of underpinning and wall replacement was required in performing alterations to the existing structure. This work besides requiring additional materials, required more time than would have been needed for new construction. Some walls had to be braced, sections removed, and then replaced. After adequate bracing had been

³⁴Cole to Ames (Feb), 1.

³⁵Skidmore, 11-12; Cole to Ames (Feb), 2; Superintendent's Monthly Report for August 1937.

³⁶Skidmore, 14, 21, and photographs within the report; Superintendent's Monthly Report for June 1937.

installed to prevent wall collapse, faulty sections of wall were removed in sections not exceeding three feet in width. The section was then rebuilt with sound stone and mortar. Time was allowed for "setting up" before beginning a section immediately adjoining. Enrollee labor performing this work was provided with shock proof helmets.

According to a later reminiscence by supervisor Cole, Finn had designed "post and beam type timbering sets to support the walls while sections were being removed in order to install foundations and new wall." In other sections where only the mortar needed replacement, workers dug out the old mortar in a braced wall and poured concrete behind a form "into the rock wall." The labor was intensive, with all demolition done by hand as no dynamite could be used because of the instability of the old walls. Many years after seeing this complicated work accomplished, Cole praised the work of Finn and wrote that "stability of the old building was a miracle."³⁷

Some of the original walls were completely replaced. According to Skidmore, "the entire transverse wall between rooms 103 and 104 [between the trading post and the lunch room], two feet thick thirty-three feet long and approximately thirty feet in height had to be removed and replaced." When the wall replacement had been finished the original hipped roof was removed. Some wall collapse occurred when the roof was removed and repairs were made. According to Cole, the work was planned so that all walls were brought up to second-floor height at the same time, "to provide a full building area for construction of the upper levels floor slabs, walls, etc." Lore's original floors were used and added to, although they required a number of alterations, causing some delays. Skidmore described the floor repairs:

- (a) The 6-inch slope in Room #10 [sic: #104, the trading post] floor had to be corrected. This was done by digging out imbedded joist ends. The low side was jacked and shimmed and the high side was lowered by means of sandbagging. After this correction was made, joist ends were grouted solidly.
- (b) The entire existing floor and sub-floor framing in Room #103 [the lunch room] had to be removed, and reframed with entirely new material.
- (c) Being 5 inches too high, the existing floor and joists in kitchen #101 had to be "dug out" and realigned to avoid step.³⁸

As the wall stabilization progressed, another CCC crew traveled on June 5 to Sitgreaves National Forest in Coconino County where, using the Los Burros CCC camp at Pinetop as a base, the fifteen enrollees spent six weeks cutting and preparing logs and poles for the structure. Skidmore

³⁷Skidmore, 14-15, and photographs in the report; Superintendent's Monthly Report for May 1937; Cole to Ames, 6.

³⁸Skidmore, 16.

prepared a list of 680 pine logs ranging in length from 6' to 24' for structural use, and 4,300 poles of quaking aspen for use as savinos. Under the supervision of a Mr. Nikolaus, a skilled timber-faller selected by the district forest ranger and hired for the purpose, the enrollees cut the ponderosa pine logs in the national forest, where the cutting had been officially justified as forest thinning. The aspen poles were cut in the White Mountain Indian Reservation nearby, with the blessing of the Apache Indian Agency's superintendent, Mr. W. Donner. The logs were transported to the construction site on a pole trailer designed and fabricated by motor foreman Duff and his crew, then stacked and covered with canvas. Unbeknownst to the foreman, a mold developed which, when discovered, required a number of days of scrubbing. Duff also contrived an A-frame structure with tongs for use in moving the large logs around the jobsite.³⁹

In August and September the CCC camp faced cutbacks when, in an economy move, Washington ordered locally employed men (LEM) and enrollees over 24 out of the corps. Superintendent Smith reported that "company strength is dropping fast. With the loss of these men who have been trained for several years, our work, which requires considerable training, will suffer to great extent." By the end of August camp numbers had dropped to eighty or less, and fifty-one men left during September. The remaining camp enrollees concentrated on work at the inn until new enrollees began to arrive in late October.⁴⁰

By September all original walls had been underpinned, and all of the necessary excavation for the boiler and laundry rooms had been completed. The contractor began to install the heating and ventilating system infrastructure at this time, including installing the chassis, pipe hangers and sleeves, and laying out trenching. The guest rooms on the northwest side were under construction that month, and the large storage shed completed and equipped. Grading and paving of the parking area adjacent to the inn occurred in September. Carpenters set up an electric table saw and jointer powered by generator on a temporary site at the inn. In mid-October the water and sewer systems were completed and accepted, and in November the 3,000-gallon oil storage tank was installed in an excavated hole on the southwest corner of the inn.⁴¹

Harold Cole took pride in his designs for concrete floor and ceiling forms. He provided an account of building the slabs in late fall 1937:

Wall construction proceeded until the level of the upper floor was reached. Over the taproom, heavy wood joists were installed for celing [sic] below, flooring above, to carry the wood flooring of the display room. Suspended concrete slabs had been designed to cover museum rooms, utility rooms and passageways.

This writer [Cole] designed the wood forms for the concrete slabs. From previous experience these were made to be removed and re-used

³⁹Skidmore, 13-14; Superintendent's Monthly Report for June 1937; Cole to Ames, 7.

⁴⁰Superintendent's Monthly Reports for August, September, and October 1937.

⁴¹Superintendent's Monthly Reports for August, September, and October 1937; Skidmore, 10, 18(a-7,41).

with a minimum loss of form lumber. This resulted in a personal foul; while he was watching the removal of the first panel, removal of a key allowed the form to swing down like a fan. Unable to dodge in time he was struck on one leg. As "Safety Engineer" he was subjected to many pointed comments from foremen and enrollees.

The concrete slabs have a rather interesting history. All were installed during very cold weather. Sand and rock for the concrete was piled over scrap culvert pipes in which [unreadable] and openings at the bottom. Six of these were placed under the slab form and coal fires were started twenty four hours prior to concrete placement. A round the clock fire watch kept these burning until five days had passed. This method has allowed the concrete to remain sound almost forty years.

The concrete slab over the main museum room was covered with random flagstone east of the building. The others, inside, are exposed and have lines in them which simulated Indian blanket designs. The designs were covered with soft stains in various tints.

A resident, familiar with the Painted Desert in winter, can envision this scene: A flat topped structure at road level with a temporary wood and canvas shelter over one area, the time approximately one or two AM, flickering lights of the coal fires showing thru vents in the walls below, bright lights shining thru the canvas flipping in the wind, air temperature 0-10 degrees above zero; at intervals a man enters the shelter from a warmer place below to test the setting of the concrete, then the words "its ready". Six men gather in the shelter, the writer, CCC foremen Close and Swanson, concrete foreman Jones, and two experienced enrollees. The concrete, previously troweled, has a network of steel wires laced over it, from nails previously set in the wood forms. These are the pattern lines of the blanket design. Flat smooth boards are carefully laid along the wires. Pointed steel stylus scratch deep lines in the hardening concrete, when completed the boards are removed, their marks troweled smooth. Heavy canvas is spread over the concrete, supported by the wires and nailed to the wood forms. The shelter is quickly dismantled, the men leave, only the fire watchers remain. The slab is completed.

After construction of floor slabs and arrival of moderate weather, the existing roof was removed and walls were laid to designed roof elevations.⁴²

⁴²Cole to Ames, 8-9.

Ground-level floors in the utility areas, boiler room and one museum room were poured concrete slabs. Cole wrote of the problems faced with the museum room slabs:

Plans called for museum floor slabs to be of continuous unmarked concrete. Previous experience had demonstrated to me that this was not practical so the floor was grooved with a centerline, longitudinal joint and two transverse. This was proven to be sound when winter snows covered the ground prior to plastering the exterior walls. A vein of bentonite clay lies under the building, centered on the main museum room, extending from approximately the center of the building to a point of exposure on the slope below the rim, east of the building. Bentonite clay absorbs moisture and expands, exerting tremendous pressure. This vein then expanded, the one side of the museum room slab tilted up about four inches along the centerline joint, hinged at the south wall, unbroken because expansion joint material had been installed to separate the slab from the wall. This expansion raised a section of the east wall about the same amount and raised the transverse wall as a unit. Nothing was broken, when the tumult and shouting died down this writer suggested that we wait until the moisture receded. Having seen this clay action, he was certain that conditions would return to normal and consultation with foreman Jones bolstered this opinion. In a relatively short time the vein shrank, settlement took place, the wall needed only minor repair, and the floor slab returned to place. A trench type cut-off was suggested to prevent re-occurrence. No action.⁴³

The above describes an incident in 1939. Cole explained that the trench cut-off had been successfully used by the Arizona Highway Department on old Route 66. The problem with the bentonite clay expansion would plague the building for years to come, and be a factor that would almost bring the Painted Desert Inn to its doom.⁴⁴

In part because of good weather that lasted through January, the inn saw a great deal of progress during the winter months. The heating contractor installed boilers, piping, duct work, the unit heater, vent fans, oil storage tank, hot water tank and other items in November and December. Early in 1938 enrollees installed beams, corbels, brackets, and posts in the trading post room. The aspen savinos on the ceiling/roof were installed, the enrollee first stripping and halving the poles and then laying them in either a parallel or herring bone pattern atop the pine roof poles or vigas. The tops of the savinos were then adzed flat, then fiber insulation, slope boards, and solid tongue-and-groove sheathing was layed over. Roofing material was laid, then hot tar and pea gravel applied for a satisfactory roof seal. But during this time, a number of accidents occurred. A man fell from the roof in December, incurring a slight concussion and bruises. In January 1938, electrician Don C.

⁴³Cole to Ames, 11.

⁴⁴Cole to Ames, 11, (Feb) 5.

McNeil was injured when hot roofing asphalt spilled on his hand. An infection developed and McNeil lost five days' work. Work continued on masonry and fire walls, and by April the roof was reported to be 75 percent complete. A power house to shelter the generators was built by stone masons on the hill south of the inn, in a style typical of the park, fitted stones and mortar.⁴⁵

In June 1937 Superintendent Smith had prepared quotation invitations for millwork required at the inn. The contract included fabrication of doors, windows, and frames, screens, hand rails, toilet stall posts and plywood for constructing the stalls, bedroom cabinets, counter linoleum and chromium plated edging, counter gates, wood grills, spindles and frames for carving and assembling by CCC enrollees, shelving lumber, and sash balances. A low bid of \$2,326.99 submitted by the Olds Brothers of Winslow, Arizona, was accepted on June 25. Some delay was encountered because of the necessity of milling the sugar pine doors on the West Coast. Delivery occurred on September 7, 1937.⁴⁶

Construction superintendent Cole supervised much of the detail work at the inn, including framing of doors and windows. Decades later he wrote an example of enrollees carrying out a unique aspect of the design:

An observer will see that the door and window openings do not have vertical, right angle wall jambs, that they are tapered in a semi-oval shape. This shape was produced in the rock and plaster to resemble the openings in old pueblo buildings where the wet adobe was shaped by the sweeping motions of the women's arms that shortened the horizontal width of the opening at top and bottom. Consider the difficulty of teaching a journeyman mason to understand and construct/plaster an opening in this fashion. After much arm waving they got the message and were able to proceed with many a ribald comment.⁴⁷

Door and window frames made by the Olds Brothers were sandblasted by enrollees to appear aged. Foreman Duff fabricated a primitive but ingenious sandblasting outfit with pipe fittings, compressor and air hose, and fed from a wheelbarrow full of sand.⁴⁸

The Army and a number of CCC enrollees began construction of a new CCC camp at the Puerco River around August 1937 to replace the poorly located camp NM-1-A at Rainbow Forest. Major J. H. Hilding, Commander of the Arizona Civilian Conservation Corps, said at the time that "he intends to make this camp the show camp of Arizona." Completed in April 1938, camp NM-2's

⁴⁵Skidmore, 10, 18(a-25-28); Superintendent's Monthly Report for December 1937, January and March 1938. The power house was removed in 1961 when the rim road was realigned, according to drawing NP-PF 2100-E Sheet 13, November 1966.

⁴⁶Skidmore, 7-8.

⁴⁷Cole to Ames, 8.

⁴⁸Cole to Ames, 10.

central location proved to be a benefit to many, but especially the enrollees working in the Painted Desert. The drive of less than 10 miles took a relatively insignificant amount of time from the men's work day, and the new facilities were no doubt better than those that had been left behind at Rainbow Forest.⁴⁹

Spring and summer 1938 proved to be a tumultuous time for construction at the inn and for the CCC in general. While work progressed steadily, utilizing an average of 400 man-days of enrollees per month, the camp endured a shutdown in July and two disturbing accidents occurred.

Chief architect Vint, along with regional architect Cornell, assistant landscape architect Kuehl, and CCC inspector J. H. Haile, inspected the inn work on July 3, 1938. At the time the CCC involvement was "on the verge of being shut down," as Skidmore put it. Skidmore himself had accepted a position at the regional office in San Francisco which would begin on September 1. Vint decided that the remaining work, which largely consisted of plastering, flooring, finish work, and production and placement of fixtures, be continued under Skidmore's supervision until the heating contract was completed and accepted. The CCC camp had been disbanded only days previous to Vint's visit, leaving only thirty enrollees, three skilled tradesmen, the project superintendent, two foremen, and the assistant architect, Lorimer Skidmore. Because authorization for the use of CCC labor had expired, and funds for skilled laborers and materials had run out, the camp was temporarily shut down on July 15, 1938, for a period of almost three weeks until August 2. At that time the CCC had paid for \$7,382.75 for skilled labor and \$3,412.26 for materials and tools. The acting regional director requested that Skidmore prepare a set of estimates for completion and equipping of the Painted Desert Inn. Funds were authorized on August 1 for nine of Skidmore's twelve recommendations, an amount totalling \$5,655.00. Work started again on the inn on August 7, 1938, with the goal of finishing the project within the present budget.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, two accidents occurred in June. First, a dump truck hauling material to the inn collided with another truck on Route 66, causing damage but no injuries. Five days later, on June 26, an enrollee on overnight watch duty attempted to cook some food over an open fire in the basement of the inn. He carelessly threw gasoline on the fire, setting his clothes ablaze. The man ran out of the room and doused the fire in the sand outdoors. Badly burned, he was discovered by passersby who took him to the CCC camp, and was then taken to the hospital. The Painted Desert Inn apparently sustained no damage from the incident.⁵¹

Contractor Charles Schiemann completed the heating and ventilation systems in July 1938. The system was tested in the company of the superintendent and the supervising architect on July 13, and was found to be "satisfactory in every way." Schiemann and his crew from Chicago finished up details during the following month and received final payment in September for his work.⁵²

⁴⁹Superintendent's Monthly Reports for February and March 1938.

⁵⁰Superintendent's Monthly Report for July 1938; Skidmore, 13.

⁵¹Superintendent's Monthly Report for June 1938.

⁵²Skidmore, 10-11, 18(a-40).

Construction slowly progressed as supervisors awaited new enrollees. A new company arrived on August 2 but, according to the monument superintendent, "soon after several were discharged and sent to their homes"; one had been caught with petrified wood in his baggage, was arrested, and spent one night in jail before being released. Work progressed at the inn, although slower because of training requirements for the new enrollees. After the departure of Skidmore, the Painted Desert Inn's designer Lyle Bennett supervised the work personally at times. Skidmore returned from his western region assignment in the fall to prepare a progress report on construction to date at the Painted Desert Inn. The report, profusely illustrated with photographs of all construction phases, was completed in October 1938 and submitted to the director of the National Park Service by the new year. In the report, Skidmore complained of a number of difficulties he had encountered in the job. Shortage of skilled foremen, the loss of experienced CCC enrollees through turnovers at the camp, and procurement bureaucracy caused some exasperation on Skidmore's part, as well as a frustrating requirement that only one skilled laborer be hired at any one time, so that, "if a finish carpenter were required, then the plumber must be 'laid off,' etc." Also, until the new CCC camp had been completed, enrollees worked six-hour days, with two hours having been used in transit between the inn job site and the camp at Rainbow Forest. The enrollees acted as assistants to skilled laborers, who insisted, rightly, on working eight-hour days. Skidmore noted that "this setup naturally tended to encourage inefficiency on the part of the skilled laborers when enrollees were not there to act as helpers." As a professional architect, Skidmore did not appear to take easily the delays that resulted from the fact that the CCC men were there on six-month assignments: "After being broken in and of value on the job, several groups were transferred or terminated, necessitating 'breaking in' new men."⁵³

Skidmore revealed that approximately 1,400 cubic yards of building stone and more than 3,000 sacks of cement were used in construction of the Painted Desert Inn, and that the walls were 27" thick.⁵⁴ By September 1938 the new enrollees were "up to speed" and the work again progressed efficiently. Excavation for the residential area utilities was completed that month across the rim road from the inn; here would be built two park residences, the first of a planned complex of housing and park utility units. Workers completed the first inside plaster coat in the inn, and the finish coat of plaster on the comfort station rooms and the shower rooms. Interior plastering was completed by November, and exterior plastering and finish flooring was underway.⁵⁵

John H. Cole commenced installing the flagstone floors and building the stone stairway in the tap room. CCC supervisor Harold Cole designed a pattern for the flagstones, "a regular pattern of stone that was repeated in approximately 4x5-foot sections and that satisfied the architectural requirement that good quality flagstone design joints do not extend past two stones. This plan enabled the crew to cut the stones outside the building for installation in a confined, interior area." Placement of flagstone floors in the tap room and guest rooms brought the heavy work of the project close to

⁵³Superintendent's Monthly Report for August and September 1938; Skidmore, 15-16, 22, et al. The skilled laborers hired with CCC funds were paid the Arizona minimum wage, namely: \$1.25 per hour for masons and plasterers; \$1.00 per hour for finish carpenters; \$1.25 per hour for sheet-metal workers.

⁵⁴Skidmore, 3.

⁵⁵Superintendent's Monthly Reports for September and November 1938.

completion. However, the wood flooring in the display room encountered a serious problem: warped lumber. Supervisor Cole wrote:

Trouble was encountered immediately. In order to use the allotted funds, materials had been purchased well in advance of use. The hardwood flooring had been stored for approximately eighteen months. The boards were well weighted to prevent curling but no method has ever been developed to prevent boards from warping in the plane of their surfaces when stored as we were forced to do in such primitive ways. When the boards were laid out on the joists foreman Close called me to the scene. He had tried every way he knew to press the warps into position, nothing worked. Architect Skidmore said "I'm glad you are the construction man" and walked away. This writer had seen a two-piece shoe, hinged one above the other, on a rounded end of a crowbar that had applied tremendous leverage. With a drawing of this contraption, once again foreman Duff was able to fabricate a tool that would grip the wood subflooring and press against the grooved edge of the flooring. Two men were needed on the crowbar to straighten the wood. Wood blocks were quickly spiked in place to prevent the flooring from tearing its nailing from the joists. Many extra days were spent beyond a normal time for installation.⁵⁶

By the end of the year all flooring, including flagstone in the guest rooms and tap room and oak flooring in others, had been installed. As construction on the Painted Desert Inn neared completion, some CCC enrollees were assigned as guides and visitor contacts, a departure from the rigors of heavy construction. Superintendent Smith wrote that "the finishing touches to this major project will soon commence."⁵⁷

A setback occurred in early December when the oil-burning furnace located in the basement utility room backfired, blowing the doors open but not causing any major damage. The unit was cleaned but on December 22 a "terrific explosion" in the firebox blew the doors off completely and caused a considerable bulge in the insulating jacket around the boiler. Apparently the unit was repaired, as it was not mentioned again in the superintendent's reports.⁵⁸

In January 1939 a new batch of enrollees arrived at Petrified Forest, mainly from the Philadelphia area. Little work occurred on the inn itself during the first half of the year, but many man-days were used in developing and constructing walks and terraces on the inn grounds. Early in March bids were invited to operate the concession area at the inn, requiring a financial rating of \$13,000. The superintendent expressed hope that "a responsible operator may be secured who will be

⁵⁶Cole to Ames, 10-11; Superintendent's Monthly Report for October 1939.

⁵⁷Superintendent's Monthly Reports for September, October, and November 1938.

⁵⁸Superintendent's Monthly Report for December 1938.

a credit to the service," but found few serious takers. Plans for the Painted Desert Museum, to be located in two basement rooms of the inn, were developed by park naturalist Howard Stagner, who traveled to the Western Museum Laboratories in Berkeley to work with professional exhibit designers. The CCC performed no work on the Painted Desert Inn in July or August 1939, but by October work on the inn was renewed and the CCC began to construct furniture and fixtures.⁵⁹ Harold Cole wrote of this time:

Design drawings were arriving for furniture, display cabinets, counters; then metal fixtures. By this time the utility building in the NPS area had been completed to the point that it provided an excellent shop area for finish carpentry and metal work, protected from the incessant wind and inclement weather. Various wood items were cut out, ornamented, and packaged unassembled until time for installation. Chairs were made complete.⁶⁰

Furnishings made by CCC enrollees included stamped tinware light fixtures imitating Mexican decorations, ranging in size from small wall sconces and suspended lights to hanging four-bulb chandeliers. Electrical tinware chandeliers in two styles illuminated the large trading post room and lunch room, while smaller fixtures in eight different styles were used elsewhere throughout the building. Handmade chairs and tables were used in the dining and lunch rooms, as well as swiveling stools at the soda fountain in the lunch room. Each was carved with notches and scallops, and painted with floral and bird designs. These echoed the theme found in the brackets and corbels in the roof and ceiling structure, carved and painted in the form of massive, symmetrical scrolls. Detail carving could be found throughout the building.⁶¹

Work on the Painted Desert Inn progressed through the winter, with CCC crews spending an average of 175 man-days per month finishing the project. Superintendent Smith optimistically projected an opening date of May 1; ironically, Smith was transferred from the monument on that date, leaving behind an unfinished project that he had been closely involved with since its earliest inspiration. In spring 1940, assistant landscape architect Charles E. Krueger supervised landscaping and planting of the inn grounds, which, according to Thomas Whitcraft, the monument's new superintendent, "greatly improved the appearance of the building." It may have been at this time that a large, buttressed stone retaining wall built by Lore was removed from the area northwest of the inn and the site regraded to a more natural slope. As completion of the inn neared, the CCC spent from 350 man-days in February to 574 man-days in May rushing to meet an opening date of July 4 within budget. The last jobs to be completed included installation of a butane gas system for cooking, replacement of a broken section in the hot-water boiler, installation of two light plants, attachment of

⁵⁹Superintendent's Monthly Reports for January, February, March, July, August, and October 1939.

⁶⁰Cole to Ames, 8.

⁶¹"Evaluation of Structures," 6.

a few plumbing and light fixtures, installation of the refrigerator, completion of the bedroom furniture, and cleanup of the entire building and grounds.⁶²

A number of changes occurred from the plans to the final construction. Supervising Architect Skidmore outlined these changes in his report:

1. Change from frame construction to stone side walls, parapets, and flagstone steps from room 104 [the trading post] to room 13 [the tap room]. This change was recommended by the Supervising Architect due to lack of lumber and no funds to purchase same.
2. Use of flagstone floors in rooms 7 to 12 inclusive and hand hewn flagstone hearths instead of concrete as indicated.
3. Installation of an auxillary [sic] condensation tank with float in place of left fitting in vacuum return line located in boiler room pit.
4. Change to concrete slab instead of frame roof over toilet room No. 6 [female shower] (deck over).
5. Concrete slabs instead of bituminous paving over porches 102-A [porch] and 104-A [balcony].
6. Revision step, drinking fountain location and construction of shallow [?] tile counter in Room 105 [entry/ranger room].⁶³

One of the last projects for completion at the Painted Desert Inn was the interior decorating. The inn had been designed with a skylight that would have Indian motifs painted on the panes, and the concrete floors and some rooms had designs scored in the smooth finish. The final paint schemes were the work of architect Lyle Bennett, as described by Harold Cole:

Wall plaster work had been completed and cured, the time for color preparation had arrived. Mr. Bennett spent many hours at the site experimenting with color combinations and materials for paints and stains. Foreman Swanson was placed in charge of this work. CCC enrollees did all the work in decorating, from the skylites, wood structures, thru the colors on carved furniture designs, paints in guest rooms and rest rooms, to the color stains on concrete floors to complete the Indian blanket designs. The whole interior seemed to glow with soft, blended coloring. Then time I had personally spent

⁶²Superintendent's Monthly Reports for February through May 1940.

⁶³Skidmore, 17. Contrary to Skidmore's sections 4 and 5 above, original drawings indicate a concrete slab was indeed planned over room 6; during recent work no concrete slab was found over room 104-a.

with Mr. Bennett was a revelation to me of what can be accomplished with color combinations. I can only wish that an observer today [1976] could have had the great privilege of viewing the interior of the Inn at the time of its completion.⁶⁴

V. Painted Desert Inn, 1940-1947

Standard Concessions, Inc.

The National Park Service entered a three-year concession contract with Standard Concessions, Inc., of Chicago, owned by Rose McGrath with minor interests held by her son Edward and his wife, Marie. The McGraths took the concession with the stipulation that they give up any interest in their operations in Chicago, with which they reportedly complied. Terms would be a lease for \$10 per year for the building, with the concession receiving 6 percent of the net profits and giving 47 percent of any profit over that to the National Park Service. Edward McGrath, acting as vice president and general manager, and his wife arrived to manage the operation on June 28, with an aim to open the inn with limited service on July 4 and to open fully by mid-month. An immediate problem arose with the inadequacy of the electric plant at the Painted Desert section. The superintendent wrote, as McGrath was preparing to open, that "he [McGrath] is handicapped by not having sufficient electric power to operate all appliances and lights with the small plant now in operation. It is expected that two new units of 8-kw each will arrive about July 15." While the new units were put into operation as planned, the inadequate power source continued to be a problem at the inn until later in the decade.⁶⁵

A gas and oil station in the service area across from the inn was constructed to be operated by the concessioner. Work was suspended on the station on June 15 to free up all CCC men to finish the Painted Desert Inn; out of necessity the gas station was opened in August before its construction was complete.⁶⁶

The Painted Desert Inn, a National Park Service/CCC project that had "taken precedence over all other construction projects in the Monument," apparently opened as planned on the Fourth of July 1940. The superintendent's monthly report for that month stated:

The Painted Desert Inn has been in operation the entire month with the operator increasing his stock and service as the public demands. During the first half of July considerable difficulty was encountered in supplying sufficient power for the Inn, however, this was corrected by renting an 8-KVA plant until the two new units arrive on August 18.

⁶⁴Cole to Ames, 12.

⁶⁵Susan Barrett, "Administrative History of Petrified Forest National Park" (MS, Petrified Forest National Park, 1967), 98-99; Superintendent's Monthly Report for June 1940.

⁶⁶Superintendent's Monthly Reports for June through August 1940.

The operator is well satisfied with the building and feels that his business will triple that of July when the place becomes better known. An average of 200 people per day visit the Inn with a total travel of 22,122 persons taking the rim drive during July. An average of ten requests are made daily for overnight accommodations at the Inn, and the operator has reserved three rooms [of six previously reserved for employees] in the building for this purpose. There remains a few alterations and adjustments to equipment before the building can be completely turned over to the operator. In order that the operator may increase public service, gas pumps are now being installed and will be in operation prior to the completion of the gas and oil station.⁶⁷

The inn's business gradually increased during July as word caught on with travelers and local residents. All of the furniture had been completed and installed and doors and windows fine-tuned by September. McGrath fully stocked the restaurant and curio shop, although, because of "State technicalities," the tap room had yet to open; McGrath had trouble getting a liquor license, a frustrating setback as the inn had been equipped with the fixtures for a bar in the tap room. McGrath, himself known to have problems with drink, received complaints of slow service and struggled with the inadequate power supply which kept the operators from using certain electrical appliances and thus slowing down business. These problems notwithstanding, by August business was booming at Painted Desert Inn.⁶⁸

The superintendent reported that 10,000 visitors registered at the Painted Desert Museum, a temporary exhibit in one of the museum rooms, during August. "Many complimentary remarks are received daily from visitors entering Painted Desert Inn on the design of the building and the splendid manner in which Operator Edward McGrath has arranged the interior," wrote Superintendent Whitcraft. "The beautiful colors displayed in the Painted Desert viewed from this point, receive their share of comments, often delaying visitors two to four hours." Some years later, an editor at Arizona Highways wrote: "With an eye for just such effects, some inspired person planned and built the museum [Painted Desert Inn] to best survey the Painted Desert. What man has created blends into and is part of the country, an infinitesimal spec in a vast panorama of plateau, sky and color that is the Painted Desert."⁶⁹

Calling the Painted Desert Inn "one of the most outstanding projects ever to be attempted by CCC," superintendent Whitcraft announced at the end of September that the inn work was "100% complete." With all furniture completed and installed, and signs painted throughout the complex, the inn became popular with local clubs and civic organizations for banquets and programs in the evenings, and saw "considerable local trade of small group dinner parties." Greyhound ran regularly scheduled bus excursions into the park with stops at the Painted Desert Inn. An early menu offered a

⁶⁷Superintendent's Monthly Report for July 1940.

⁶⁸Superintendent's Monthly Reports for July and August 1940; Barrett, 99.

⁶⁹Superintendent's Monthly Report for August 1940; Arizona Highways (May 1950), 1.

wide variety of breakfast items served from 6:00 to 11:00 a.m., with "club breakfasts" ordered by number and priced from 35¢ to 75¢. An à la carte menu offered thirty kinds of sandwiches, a variety of specials including chicken, spaghetti, and chili con carne, plus steaks and chops, vegetables, salads, desserts, and beverages including beer. The tap room opened in early November 1940, serving wine, beer, and hard liquor.⁷⁰

Daily, dozens of visitors inquired about or requested lodging at the Painted Desert Inn. The six bedrooms in the northwest corner of the building had been reserved for employees of the concessioner. McGrath offered materials for building six guest cabins on the grounds of the inn if the government would do the construction work. In December 1940, a decrease in staff left two or three rooms available which McGrath rented almost every night to the public; still, he continued to turn away many people. During January, twenty-eight people stayed in rented rooms, while fifty were turned away. Two months later, eighty-one overnight guests were accommodated, paying roughly \$2.50 per night, and eventually as many as 300 people were turned away for lodging in a month's time. Superintendent Whitcraft wrote that "this definitely shows that there is a demand for cabins and that considerable revenue can be derived from such accommodations by the operator as well as the NPS." The superintendent and McGrath traveled to Bandelier National Monument to inspect rental cabins, and then submitted preliminary plans for similar cabins at the Painted Desert Inn. The plans, dated March 1941, showed three proposed units, each with two cabins, located directly west of the inn, with six additional cabins to be constructed later. Lyle Bennett designed the cabins in three basic styles for compatibility with the inn; with the low lines of a pueblo, the cabins blended with the landscape as the inn did. The plans indicate that they were approved by chief architect Vint, the monument superintendent, the regional director, and the director of the National Park Service. Apparently, the project was interrupted by World War II, as nothing ever came of these plans. The proposed cabins did reappear in a 1949 master plan of the Painted Desert section of the monument.⁷¹

Another, more serious problem was the continuing lack of adequate electrical power at the inn. The power house across the rim road from the inn was originally equipped with a 5 kva Kohler generator, but as this had been found to be insufficient, an 8 kva light plant was rented while two more powerful units were on order. The inn operated for about three months with the one small generator, and the replacements still did not supply enough power. In addition, the new plants continually broke down or needed constant maintenance, largely because they were being pushed to provide up to 50 percent more power than the units were designed to handle; it was generally accepted that 40 kw of power were needed to supply ample power in the Painted Desert area, including the two residences, but only 16 kw was available. Beyond the inconveniences to the operators in not being able to run most of the appliances or expand services to include a soda fountain, the visitor was affected as well, as the superintendent reported: "Although no written complaints have been received, several visitors have expressed disappointment when visiting the Painted Desert Inn during the evenings. Shortage of power places all rooms within the building in a semi-dark condition, which causes considerable loss to the operator." The superintendent urged at the

⁷⁰Barrett, 100; Superintendent's Monthly Report for September 1940; menu from Painted Desert Inn (ca. 1940-1942), catalog No. PEFO 2903.

⁷¹Superintendent's Monthly Reports for September and October 1940, May 1941; Drawings No. NM-PF-2045, PFNM-2104B, NM-PF-2104-C, Denver Service Center.

end of 1940 that "immediate consideration should be given to this problem and steps be taken to provide ample electric power to operate this new and expensive development at Painted Desert." Later he wrote, "the present facilities provided by the National Park Service at Painted Desert Inn for the convenience of Monument visitors are seriously handicapped by failure of electricity." The problem was not solved until after the war, when Standard Concessions, Inc. bought its own light plant, and, finally, when commercial electrical service was installed in 1950.⁷²

Other problems emerged at Painted Desert Inn as well. Shortly after opening, the superintendent noted:

"It is necessary that all light fixtures installed in Painted Desert Inn be removed and new wire installed. Wire leading from the ceiling box into the fixtures was forced through a hole too small for the wire, which peeled back most of the installation [insulation]. Holes must be enlarged and new asbestos-covered wire installed. Two fixtures have shorted out from the above cause during September. No provision was made in any part of the building for inside fire hose connections. Arrangements should be made at once for funds to cover this very valuable installation. . . . All extinguishers in the building have been checked, and all are being placed in proper places."⁷³

Problems with the heating system emerged when it was discovered that surplus water forming in the steam lines had to be drained off manually through a valve because of a faulty vacuum pump. The problem mystified local plumbers, who recommended the expertise of someone trained at the factory. The pump was repaired in summer 1941. Fall storms revealed a number of roof leaks throughout the building which required "considerable time" spent performing repairs in December 1940. Leaks still plagued the building into the next year, resulting in the need for replastering ceilings in affected areas.

In July 1942, a fire started in the kitchen during the night, only to be discovered the following morning. Caused by a short in a plug-in wire, the fire burned a large hole in the floor and a 10'-square portion of a wall through the masonry. Smoke damaged the entire upstairs of the inn, and a refrigerator owned by the government and used by the concessioner was destroyed. The damage, estimated at \$1,000, was quickly repaired, which involved reframing, replastering, replacing a section of the floor, and repairing the ceiling of the room under the kitchen.⁷⁴

While the CCC worked on landscaping at the Painted Desert Inn and resloping cut banks near the residences, as well as removing "obnoxious weeds" from the area, park maintenance workers took over repairs on the inn itself. In February 1941, repairs were necessary on doors, windows and chairs, and some minor drainage work was performed involving resetting of flagstones outside one of

⁷²Superintendent's Monthly Reports for August, October, and November 1940, January and April 1941, April and May 1946.

⁷³Superintendent's Monthly Report for September 1940.

⁷⁴Superintendent's Monthly Reports for October and December 1940, July and August 1942.

the lodging rooms. In one incident, a visitor fell on the flagstone steps to the museum, subsequently complaining about the lack of a handrail. The east parking lot required additional fill to eliminate puddles. Adjustments on the heating system, which involved enlarging the fire boxes, replacing liners, and adjusting the blower and burners, increased heating efficiency and reduced heating costs of the inn building by 33 percent later in the year.⁷⁵

The inn saw increased business throughout 1941, with all rental rooms filled and hundreds of people turned away. The concessioners received complaints about service which resulted in the discharge of an employee, but overall the operation was a success. Manager McGrath placed a large sign atop the building with 16" letters proclaiming, "PAINTED DESERT INN," reportedly prompting twice as many park visitors to stop and enter the building.⁷⁶

Painted Desert Museum

The Painted Desert Museum, located under the ranger room, was open regularly during the first months of inn operation, but closed in October because of lack of staff. The museum continued to have an uneven record of availability to the public for the next two decades. The museum featured a temporary exhibit of items from the monument's collection, mainly Indian artifacts and rugs. The final museum plan, drafted by park naturalist Howard Stagner and developed at the National Park Service's Western Museum Laboratory in Berkeley, California, was subjected to review at the regional office and Washington headquarters. The museum's location, on a lower level below the ranger information center, presented a problem of circulation. Visitors often bypassed the museum completely, being directed by natural flow from the information area to the concessioner's curio room which was visible from the government section of the building. The superintendent, noting that the current arrangement "definitely subordinates the museum facilities to the curio rooms," explained the problem and offered a solution:

The present route from the Information Room to the museum rooms is an awkward one, requiring the visitor to pass through three doors, make five right angle turns, and to descend two flights of stairs to reach the museum. Tentatively, it is suggested that the route from the information room to be simplified and made more inviting by making a new exit from the Information Room leading directly only to the museum rooms.⁷⁷

Meanwhile, plans for the permanent museum exhibit were delayed by review processes and revisions. Park staff displayed Indian items in the information room; a collection of Indian rugs and blankets was put on display in the one finished basement museum room, augmented with items borrowed from

⁷⁵Superintendent's Monthly Reports for February, May, September, and October 1941.

⁷⁶Superintendent's Monthly Report for October 1941.

⁷⁷Superintendent's Monthly Report for November 1940.

the Rainbow Forest Museum. These improvised exhibits resulted in, according to the superintendent at the time, "many complimentary comments from Monument visitors."⁷⁸

The centerpiece of the museum display was Adolph Schuster's "priceless" collection of Indian arts and crafts, largely prehistoric pottery and Indian baskets collected over a period of forty years. Schuster, a settler and pioneer merchant of Holbrook, leased his valuable collection to the monument for display in 1933; the collection had previously been on display at the Los Angeles Museum at Exposition Park for several years. The Schuster collection, and the Amelia Elizabeth White collection of Indian rugs, were displayed in the monument's Rainbow Forest Museum for about six years before being moved to the Painted Desert Museum.⁷⁹

Apparently the museum plans that had been worked on for so long were put to use in March 1942, a time when visitors to the park were few because of the war. The superintendent reported that after "considerable work [was] done," the museum was open every day, with lectures offered at times. The museum succumbed to the effects of the war on the park and was closed in 1943. The Painted Desert Museum, while it reopened on a limited basis after the war, never again had any of the energy and ambition previously seen.⁸⁰

Painted Desert Inn During World War II

The entry of the United States into World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, brought major changes to Petrified Forest National Monument: the number of visitors quickly "nose dived" as much as 85 percent, resulting in a drop in patronage at the Painted Desert Inn; park rangers, including superintendent Whitcraft, left for active duty in the armed services; and the Civilian Conservation Corps was disbanded. Camp NP-8-A closed on March 7, 1942. The superintendent wrote that "the loss is keenly felt and it is hoped that as soon as world affairs return to normal, a CCC camp will again be assigned to this area." He credited the CCC with 90 percent of the park's development other than road construction; the Painted Desert Inn represented the crown jewel of CCC work in the monument.⁸¹

Lorimer Skidmore, supervising architect on the inn construction, had been highly impressed with the work and enthusiasm of the enrollees. He wrote in his final construction report that "the majority of CCC enrollees and all its personnel took an active interest in this construction. When transferred, moved or terminated due to extent of enrollment or age limit rulings, many enrollees expressed their desire to stay and see this interesting job completed. Many of these Oklahoma,

⁷⁸Superintendent's Monthly Reports for August 1940 and February 1941; "Preliminary Exhibit Plan for the Painted Desert Museum, April, 1939," PEFO.

⁷⁹Superintendent's Monthly Reports for August 1940 and February 1941; "Preliminary Exhibit Plan for the Painted Desert Museum, April, 1939," PEFO.

⁸⁰Superintendent's Monthly Reports for February and July 1942, March 1943, May 1949.

⁸¹Superintendent's Monthly Reports, December 1941, March 1942.

Texas, Arizona and Pennsylvania enrollees developed into excellent stone masons, plasterers, carpenters, electricians and plumbers helpers.⁸² CCC supervisor Harold Cole later recalled the gifts that his men took with them after leaving the camp, having received a letter from the commandant of the Navy Yard in Philadelphia:

[The commandant] commented on the fact that his personnel officer had found in the hundreds of applications for employment an unprecedented number that noted a skill with hand tools. Collecting these, he also found over four hundred showed a CCC enlistment at the Petrified Forest. His letter highly commended the Corps for its activities, specifically the Forest location for the training and self confidence the men had received.⁸³

Cole held great regard for the men who worked for him during the years of construction on the Painted Desert Inn. "The men that accomplished this work put more than mere employment into their work," wrote Cole. These men were dedicated to a belief in the values of good accomplishment of job[s] given them. Without their initiative, ingenuity, [and] ability to train young men, this building, which was literally built by hand without modern machinery, would not exist today."⁸⁴

The effect of the United States' entry into World War II was "very noticeable" at the park, as visitor numbers plunged. Tensions of the time emerged as a 24-hour guard was placed at the Puerco River bridge and rail overpass to watch for sabotage. Gas rationing drastically lowered the number of pleasure travelers in the country. While business at Painted Desert Inn decreased 33 percent by April, operators found that visitors were spending more, and members of the armed forces provided the inn with a great deal of business. McGrath offered a discount to people in uniform, finding that some two-thirds of his customers were military men. But more and more, people were only traveling through and not spending much money, arriving at the inn late in the evening, staying the night, and leaving early. By July 1942, when an 85 percent decrease in visitors was logged, it became evident that the inn would not survive. On October 1, the end of tourist season, Painted Desert Inn was closed, at least until travel increased "to a point where the operation of the Inn can be effected without loss to the operator." On October 8 inn manager McGrath and his family returned to Chicago where he joined the Navy, spending the war operating concessions in Chicago and Arizona. "The Inn has been boarded up and all utilities disconnected, and pipes and heating system drained," wrote the superintendent. With the reduced need for power, the generators were subsequently used only for refrigeration and lighting in ranger residences. The ranger information room, unmanned for much of the inn's existence because of short staff, and the Painted Desert Museum closed in March

⁸²Skidmore, 16-17.

⁸³Cole to Ames, 4.

⁸⁴Cole to Ames, 12.

1943. The artifacts in the museum were carefully repacked, treated with insect repellent, and stored.⁸⁵

The inn remained closed for almost four years; during the interval, some minor repairs were undertaken, including replastering the ceilings and patching cracks in the rest rooms, and repairing doors after the inn was broken into in late 1943. After the end of the war, an unprecedented boom in visitors at the monument occurred, and repairs were performed at Painted Desert Inn to prepare for reopening. These included filling all interior wall cracks, replacing damaged plumbing, electric switches and wire, and repairs to electric appliances.⁸⁶

The Inn Reopens

Edward McGrath returned from naval duty to operate Painted Desert Inn again for his company, Standard Concessions, Inc., which was given a one-year concession contract. His return was not without controversy, as his previous problems with drinking had led the superintendent to voice concerns as to the appropriateness of McGrath's receiving a new contract, and protests from local residents. But with travel at Petrified Forest National Monument exceeding all previous records, reopening of the inn was no doubt a priority at the park, and National Park Service director Hillory A. Tolson supported McGrath's return. After repairs were made by park maintenance workers, the Painted Desert Inn reopened for limited service on April 10, 1946. By the end of the month meals were being served, the curio room was in operation, and two rooms were available for overnight rentals. Again, electrical power proved to be a problem; perhaps frustrated with the park's handling of the issue, Standard Concessions bought its own power plant, thereby solving most of the technical difficulties in operating the inn.⁸⁷

Business at the inn exceeded expectations, with a higher demand for meals than in the past. Returning superintendent Whitcraft reported:

The meal business has been especially good as has the consumption of cold drinks when available. The demand for over-night accommodations has been such at Painted Desert Inn that Manager Edward McGrath has been authorized to install canvas cots for visitors use who have been unable to find other accommodations. It has been observed that many now are traveling at night, and renting rooms during the daylight hours. This has happened several times at Painted Desert Inn.⁸⁸

⁸⁵Superintendent's Monthly Reports for December 1941, entire year 1942, March 1943; "Concession History of Painted Desert Inn," n.d., PEFO, 1.

⁸⁶Superintendent's Monthly Reports for June 1942, November 1943, April 1946.

⁸⁷Superintendent's Monthly Reports for April and May 1946; Barrett, 100-101.

⁸⁸Superintendent's Monthly Report for April 1946.

A health inspector from the State Public Health Board proposed some changes in the kitchen to which the management responded favorably, in hopes of obtaining a Grade A rating. The restrooms were put into operation in June, and an employee of the inn manned the Painted Desert contact station on the highway to fill in for the short-staffed park.⁸⁹

Heavy rains in July caused new leaks in the curio room which were repaired. McGrath painted the interior of the kitchen, parts of the dining room and the lunch room. Business was good, with the operators getting requests for lodging some five times as great as what could be accommodated at the inn. While the times were good for business, the personal life of the manager of Painted Desert Inn took a downhill turn, as noted by the superintendent:

Manager Edward McGrath, Painted Desert Inn, was relieved of managership by the Superintendent because of excessive drinking which resulted in a family quarrel taking place in the public section of the building during hours of operation.⁹⁰

McGrath left Arizona, leaving his wife to operate the inn. McGrath's personal problems reportedly were well known; one man familiar with McGrath later wrote that his behavior was "a public scandal that brought disrepute down on the park. Had the acting Superintendent possessed the character and moral fiber of Supt. Charles Smith, McGrath and his 'family' would have been ejected from the Park regardless of any resulting contractual problems."⁹¹

Standard Concessions put the Painted Desert Inn contract up for sale, and management at the monument began looking for new concessioners for the inn. In September the superintendent reported that five individuals or companies were interested in the contract. Mrs. McGrath turned over operation of the inn to Thomas Gould, who acted as manager for Standard Concessions; business continued to be excellent.⁹²

Physically, the Painted Desert Inn endured a number of problems. More roof leaks appeared but the park had no repair materials available. The bathrooms were closed for ten days because of a water system breakdown. Attempts in 1947 at creating a leach field for the inn were unsuccessful, and it was decided to pipe the sewage, according to the superintendent, "to the base of the hill [below the Inn] allowing it to spread and evaporate," evidently with a sprayer system. In April 1947 two improvement projects at the inn were completed. Workers installed handrails on each side of the stairs leading to the lower level and to the museum, perhaps in response to the accident that had occurred there some years earlier. The restrooms were completely renovated by removing all loose

⁸⁹Superintendent's Monthly Reports for May and June 1946.

⁹⁰Superintendent's Monthly Report for August 1946.

⁹¹Cole to Ames (Feb), 4.

⁹²Superintendent's Monthly Reports for July through November 1946.

plaster and replastering openings. The floors, walls and ceilings of the bathrooms were repainted. In addition, switches were installed to control the flow of current to the inn.⁹³

VI. Painted Desert Inn, 1947-1963

By May 1947, and probably earlier, the Fred Harvey Company had expressed a serious interest in operating the Painted Desert Inn, and commenced negotiations with the National Park Service. Meanwhile, Standard Concessions, Inc., instructed manager Gould to not restock the curio section, resulting in a drop in sales. The lunch and meal business remained brisk, however. On May 28, officials from Fred Harvey inspected the inn and took inventory. By May 31, "a large stock of curios was on display . . . and the large ice box was full of food, in preparation of the opening." After a brief closure, Painted Desert Inn reopened on the first of June as a Fred Harvey concession, joining the company's string of lodges, restaurants, and curio shops located in cities, towns, and national parks throughout the southwest.⁹⁴

Brief History of the Fred Harvey Company

Founded in 1876 to provide food to passengers on the Santa Fe Railway, the Chicago-based Fred Harvey Company eventually operated dozens of gift shops, newsstands, restaurants, and depot hotels throughout the southwest, as well as building and managing the hotels at the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park. One of the first "Harvey Houses" opened by Englishman Fred Harvey was at Holbrook, Arizona, in 1884. Harvey stocked his restaurants with fresh food through the use of refrigerated boxcars, and meals were timed through a pre-ordering system so that rail passengers could disembark the train and be fed within 30 minutes. In 1901 Fred Harvey established an Indian Department to promote sales of native jewelry and "curios." In the 1890s the company embarked on a building program designed to attract travelers to the southwest. By the turn of the century, Harvey was producing architectural gems such as the Alvarado in Albuquerque, El Tovar at Grand Canyon, and El Ortiz in Lamy, New Mexico, hiring well-known architects such as Charles F. Whittlesey and Louis Curtiss. While not originally a Fred Harvey product, the Painted Desert Inn proved to fit the Harvey mold very well in the years to come.⁹⁵

Operation of the Painted Desert Inn

Under the umbrella of the Fred Harvey Company, the Painted Desert Inn thrived. With increased efficiency of the large and venerable business, the inn served visitors familiar fare, with

⁹³Superintendent's Monthly Reports for July, October, December 1946, April 1947.

⁹⁴Superintendent's Monthly Reports for May and June 1947. In his letter to David Ames, Harold Cole wrote that Fred Harvey Company had been invited at the beginning to take the concession, but they did not think at the time that the Painted Desert Inn fit the requirements of the company.

⁹⁵Virginia L. Grattan, Mary Colter, Builder Upon the Red Earth (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1980), 6-7, 125.

many customers knowing what to expect at the inn. Management made a number of changes in the menu and the physical plant. The monument superintendent noted with enthusiasm the improvements at the inn in his monthly report:

With the operation of Painted Desert Inn under the satisfactory management of the Fred Harvey Company, many improvements have been made. Compliments have been voiced by visitors with respect to meals. New items of equipment have been installed in the kitchen. Technicians have inspected and repaired the hot water heater, electric motors and furnace. The curio room is very attractive and business in both the eating section and curio room have exceeded expectations.⁹⁶

Fred Harvey management discontinued the sale of liquor at the inn except for beer. The need for lodging persisted, with many visitors being turned away daily; according to the superintendent, some people resorted to sleeping in their cars. In the government section of the building, the information office opened for eight hours a day but inadequate staffing continued to be a problem.⁹⁷

Prior to reopening, a new government power plant was put into operation on the morning of May 29, 1947. In June, a carpenter and two to four helpers repaired the entire roof of the Painted Desert Inn, as well as making repairs on screen doors and windows.⁹⁸

In July, Fred Harvey Company replaced Mr. and Mrs. Gould, the managers who had stayed on from the Standard Concessions contract. A complaint had been made from a park-sanctioned paleontological group who, after giving 24-hour notice of their arrival complete with details as to who was in the party and their arrival time, had to wait for meals and found a limited choice of food. Nevertheless, the popularity of the inn grew under Fred Harvey stewardship; the superintendent noted that "many visitors have arranged their trip so as to have lunch or dinner at the Inn." Incoming revenues "exceeded all expectations of the Harvey Officials." By December, business at the inn doubled that of the previous December; at the other end of the park, the competing concession Rainbow Forest Lodge saw a decrease in business. The Painted Desert Inn had found a prominent place in the commerce of Arizona.⁹⁹

In October the Fred Harvey Company announced that the interior of the Painted Desert Inn would be renovated by their well-known architect and interior decorator, Mary Colter. Colter was

⁹⁶Superintendent's Monthly Report for June 1947.

⁹⁷Superintendent's Monthly Report for May 1947.

⁹⁸Superintendent's Monthly Report for June 1947.

⁹⁹Superintendent's Monthly Reports for July and December 1947.

familiar with the inn, and no doubt interested by it; she had visited the inn on at least one previous occasion before it had come into Harvey proprietorship.¹⁰⁰

Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter, born in 1869, had joined the Fred Harvey Company in 1902 as a designer and architect. Colter grew up with an interest in Indian art, and it was her knowledge of the subject that attracted Fred Harvey as the company expanded its operations in the southwest. Colter's first project for Fred Harvey was decorating the Indian Building of the Alvarado Hotel in Albuquerque. Then, as architect and decorator, she created the Hopi House for Harvey at Grand Canyon National Park, and decorated the cocktail lounge at El Tovar. From 1914 to 1937 Colter took charge of numerous projects at Grand Canyon: the Lookout, Hermit's Rest, Phantom Ranch, the Watchtower, Bright Angel Lodge, and two dormitories. She decorated Fred Harvey shops throughout the southwest, gaining fame as a talented but contentious designer. A biographer wrote that "Colter's buildings had their roots in the history of the land For her there was charm and dignity in these rustic beginnings. Like other architects in California and the Southwest just before the turn of the century, Mary Colter was more interested in rediscovering the cultural heritage of the region than in imitating European styles." The Painted Desert Inn was one of Colter's last projects for the Fred Harvey Company; she retired shortly after, and died at age 88 in 1958.¹⁰¹

Decorating work at the Painted Desert Inn began in the latter part of November 1947. One skilled laborer was employed preparing wall surfaces, while necessary paints and plaster repair materials ordered. Colter arrived at Painted Desert Inn on December 5. With the input of Harvey officials, superintendent Whitcraft, and a painter employed by the monument, Colter developed a color scheme for the interior of the inn; the actual painting started immediately after the design plan was adopted.¹⁰²

Work continued in January, the superintendent reporting:

All upstairs rooms were completed and all rooms downstairs with the exception of the furnace room and hall were completed. One small room designed for employees use was replastered. The outside entrance to the information room was repainted. The entire amount of \$100.00 allotted for this project will be exhausted the first week of February. Approximately \$1000.00 more will be required to effect necessary repairs on the outside of the building in patching, filling cracked masonry and refinishing the exterior surface.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰Superintendent's Monthly Report for October 1947.

¹⁰¹Grattan, 1-2, 75, 102-103, 125-126. In this book, Grattan wrongly attributes the design of furniture, tin light fixtures, and skylight designs to Colter.

¹⁰²Superintendent's Monthly Reports for November and December 1947.

¹⁰³Superintendent's Monthly Report for January 1948.

The new paint scheme was installed by the end of January 1948. In addition, the lunch counter was lowered and a step eliminated in February at a cost of \$200, and an employee room was replastered and painted. Colter then worked at designing further interior improvements, which did not occur until the following summer. The new manager, Mr. Cooper, expressed his satisfaction with the repairs done, although during the late winter sales fell at the inn and a number of staff were laid off, leaving four employees. Business increased, however, when tourist season started again in the spring.¹⁰⁴

Park managers found that to provide 24-hour electric power service at Painted Desert Inn, it was necessary that the Harvey Company assume two-thirds of the expense involved in operating the electric plants. This action was necessary to assure that the park's regular appropriation would carry through that fiscal year. Beginning in February, purchases of fuel to operate the power plants at Painted Desert were made by the Fred Harvey Company. The park made alterations to the step located in front of the lunch counter at the inn, requiring "the removal of one board which decreased the width of the step by nine inches," according to the superintendent. "The stools were reinforced by placing a band of metal two inches wide around the base of the stand level with the top edge of the step and fastening with long screws."¹⁰⁵

By May 1948, Mary Colter returned to Painted Desert Inn to supervise the painting of murals on the interior walls of the buildings. Colter hired Fred Kabotie, a Hopi Indian artist, to paint a series of three murals in the lunch room and dining room depicting aspects of local Indian life.¹⁰⁶

Fred Kabotie was born in Shungopavi, one of the Hopi villages northwest of the Painted Desert, around 1900. His family named him Nakavoma, or "day after day." Kabotie's family was "hostile" to government influences, meaning that his father and uncles resisted interference into the Hopi lifestyles. When Kabotie was 6, his family was exiled to other villages following an incident of resistance that resulted in the arrest of his father and uncles. Kabotie was forced to attend a government school and given the name Fred. While at school, Kabotie began a lifelong interest in drawing, his favorite subject being kachinas, a sacred Hopi image. As a teenager, the talented young Hopi was sent to Santa Fe Indian School, where he received support for his artistic inclinations and developed a painting style that brought interest from collectors in the southwest. At this time his name became Kabotie, a misspelling of his family name Kavotay.

Mary Colter saw Kabotie's work and commissioned him to paint murals in the Hopi Room at the Watchtower at Grand Canyon National Park in 1933. After working as a guide and manager at the Watchtower for a short time, Kabotie was hired to teach art at a new Hopi school at Oraibi. While teaching, Kabotie participated in numerous projects, including excavation of Hopi murals at Awatobi, contributing to a major Indian exhibit at the Golden Gate Exposition in 1939, and preparing murals for an exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1941. By this time Kabotie had

¹⁰⁴Superintendent's Monthly Reports for January and February 1948.

¹⁰⁵Superintendent's Monthly Reports for February and March 1948.

¹⁰⁶Superintendent's Monthly Report for May 1948.

made many influential friends in the world of art and society. In 1945 Kabotie received a Guggenheim Fellowship, during which time he began to experiment in silversmithing.¹⁰⁷

Colter doubtlessly saw a place for Kabotie's work in the Painted Desert Inn. She hired him to paint two murals in the lunch room and three in the dining room. In the largest of these, Kabotie painted his interpretation of the Hopi legend about the ceremony of young men traveling to gather salt. Kabotie related how he decided on this theme:

I had been thinking over what subject I should do, when it occurred to me that the Hopi people (from the Hopi villages) used to travel right through this country to go after their salt, which was out somewhere between St. Johns and Zuni Pueblo.

There is a big lake there, the Salt Lake, where the Hopi have been getting their salt for their own use. Salt is very, very important, no matter where, as a part of the diet of food. To get this salt of theirs, the Hopi really make a big ceremony out of it. Those who are volunteered to go for the salt get the salt for their aunts (on their father's side, according to Hopi customs). When they go from home they take food that their aunts have prepared for them to take along. On their way to the Salt Lake, they encounter many other things, sometimes they come across a bear, and here and there they run across antelopes. They spend at least one night out before they reach the lake.

The boys saw the lake, and coming near it they make a war path or a war entrance. They yell and run toward the lake, yelling like warriors. I don't know why they do that, but when it is done they step right into the lake. Sometimes, the lake is pretty shallow, sometimes it is up, and it all effects the nature of the salt that day. If it's pretty good they go right in and stoop down and get the salt from way underneath. They fill up their salt bags, and they may possibly spend another night there, then come back to the Hopi Villages by way of Zuni. They always talk about going to Zuni Pueblo, and from there they can come back home.

On their way, water is very important. In waterholes, the boys may see and encounter some wild animals

When the boys get near home, the Hopi Villages, they stop and build a fire to signal they are coming. Then the village people, especially the aunts of the boys (now a man) can get ready to receive them.

¹⁰⁷Fred Kabotie with Bill Beiknap, Fred Kabotie, Hopi Indian Artist (Flagstaff: Museum of Northern Arizona, 1977), 1-11, 17-18, 49-76, 80.

They must get up early in the morning, not just anytime in the day. When they get up on the mesa, their aunt meets them at the edge of the foot trail on top, and leads them to their homes. When they get into their homes, their aunts wash their hair, and give them new names. These names have something to do with their friendship.

And that's the way the Hopis have been getting their salt from these salt mines for centuries. But now they don't do that anymore, because they can get all their salt from the supermarket.¹⁰⁸

The salt mural was the only one signed by Kabotie. Another large mural in the dining room depicted a rainbow which mostly encloses depictions of eagles, corn symbols, a "thunderbird man," and two humans lifting a heavy basket with the help of two birds. Also in the dining room, Kabotie painted two men planting corn, and another of three eagles. In the lunch room a small circular motif on the east wall depicts a stylized face encircled by feathers, and a large mural on the north wall depicts a Hopi Buffalo dance. An uncredited park manuscript described the mural's content:

This painting depicts the Hopi Buffalo Dance, which is held in January, the coldest time of the year. The purpose of the dance is two-fold — to venerate the buffalo as a source of meat, and to create enough "energy" to offset the effects of the cold weather.

The coldest winter moon, called Pamuya, identical to the month of January, is designed for "joymaking" by the Hopis. Buffalo bring snow, which allows good hunting (by showing buffalo tracks), as well as supplying moisture for future crops. Traditionally, all Buffalo Dances are performed to invoke consent from the game for the sacrifice of their lives.

The dances are also performed in protest against the cold weather, and they are very vigorous, featuring lots of vocal antics. Older Hopis say that to be active and happy during the time of Pamuya is a good way to counteract the effects of freezing weather and thus prevent sickness.

The dancers depicted here, two men and two women, are unmasked, though their features are painted. The men wear on their heads and shoulders great buffalo hoods with upcurving horns. The women are garbed in long dresses that reach past their ankles.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸From a recording of Fred Kabotie at the dedication of the Kabotie Room at Painted Desert Inn, June 23, 1976. Transcript in files, PEFO.

¹⁰⁹Uncredited manuscript, PEFO.

Kabotie finished the murals in July and returned to teaching at the Hopi school. Kabotie's later work consisted mainly of traditional Hopi silverwork, although he returned to the Grand Canyon in 1958 to paint whimsical murals in Fred Harvey's Bright Angel Lodge. Kabotie continued to garner prizes and acclaim, including the Indian Achievement Medal from the Indian Council Fair of Chicago in 1949, and the Palmes d' Academiques of the French Government in 1954. Before his death on February 28, 1986, Kabotie was praised as "a leading influence in the field of American Indian art" by the Director Emeritus of the Museum of the American Indian. "An artist of paramount stature, known wherever Indian art is a featured effort, Fred's carefully executed Kachina ceremonial paintings bring this fascinating religious art to its maximum visual impact."¹¹⁰

In addition to the murals, Miss Colter had three large plate-glass windows installed in the curio room, replacing a door to the patio overlooking Kachina Point; a picture window was also installed in the dining room. Possibly at this time, parts of the exterior, including the entrance at the information room and the service court, were painted white. According to the superintendent, "expenses for these very attractive additions and changes has been borne by the Harvey Company." Business continued to increase at the inn, no doubt bolstered by the improvements of the last year. Also in May, the Painted Desert Museum was reopened after being closed for more than five years. Clean-up and arrangement of exhibits at Painted Desert Museum was accomplished and the museum was open to visitors during the latter part of May.¹¹¹

The inn continued being a popular locale for programs, ranging from local civic meetings to showings of the monument superintendent's home movies. During winter 1949, the inn cut its meal service to provide simple fare such as sandwiches and soups. Complaints from local residents led the management to reinstitute full meal service by March 20. That summer, Harvey Company president Byron Harvey, Jr., visited the monument to discuss the possibility of keeping longer hours at the inn. According to the superintendent,

It was agreed that the Inn would operate 12 hours daily, whereas it had been operating 11 hours this summer. However, with one hour added to the daily operating time of the Inn, it is still one hour less than the daily operating time of the Monument. Visitors arriving early at Puerco Checking Station were inquiring as to why they could not get breakfast at PDI before 7:30 A.M. The additional hour is utilized in the morning to provide breakfast service for early visitors.¹¹²

Management continued to turn away hundreds of potential overnight visitors, especially in July 1949 when monument boundary lines were crowded with amateur uranium miners.

¹¹⁰Kabotie, 92; Marjel DeLauer, "Fred Kabotie: Artist of the Year," Arizona Highways (April 1976), n.p.; obituary files, Museum of Northern Arizona; Superintendent's Monthly Report for July 1948.

¹¹¹Superintendent's Monthly Reports for May and July 1948.

¹¹²Superintendent's Monthly Reports for March and July 1949.

During 1949 a number of improvements were made at the inn. Linoleum was installed on the step adjoining the lunch counter, and the stools were reinforced. A vent pipe was installed in the kitchen to carry fumes from the automatic dishwasher. A stone slab sign reading, "PAINTED DESERT INN, STRAIGHT AHEAD" was placed on the existing stone park entrance sign on eastbound Highway 66. The next decade saw only minor improvements. Foremost of these was the introduction of commercial electric power on August 23, 1950, ending more than a decade of struggle with malfunctioning diesel power plants, inoperable appliances, and dimly lit rooms.¹¹³

Concession permit No. I-29np-43 dated June 8, 1950, outlines the terms under which Fred Harvey Company operated at Petrified Forest National Monument during the 1950s. The three-year permit authorized the sale of "meals, lunches, magazines, postcards, photographs, souvenirs, confectionery, ice cream, drinks, tobacco products, beer, wine, liquors, gasoline and oil, and such other services as are necessary in the judgement of the Director for the convenience of visitors." The permit stipulated that Harvey would maintain and operate the building and government-owned equipment, including minor repairs and alterations, and pay to the government "a sum equal to two per cent (2%) of annual gross revenue." The following equipment at the inn was listed as government-owned at the time:

- 559 gallon butane system
- 3000 gallon fuel oil system
- Steam heating system
- Hot water boiler and tank
- Range, butane
- Meat slicer, electric
- Refrigerator, walk-in type
- 2 sinks, stainless steel, fountain and bar type
- 1 sink, double, galvanized, with drain boards
- 6 bedsteads, double size
- 41 chairs, dining
- 12 tables, dining
- 2 settees
- 2 cabinets, serving tables, 2 drawer type
- 2 gasoline pumps, electrically operated
- 2 1000 gallon tanks, gasoline storage
- 1 steam table and equipment
- 1 sink, double, enamel
- 1 work board, maple top with fixtures

The permittee furnished all other equipment as needed.¹¹⁴

¹¹³Superintendent's Monthly Reports for February and March 1949; Barrett, 102.

¹¹⁴Concession Permit No. I-29np-43, approved June 8, 1950, PEFO.

During the 1950s the Painted Desert Inn offered no dinners or lodging. A lunch menu dating from the time while Bert C. South managed the inn offered hot and cold sandwiches, soup and salads, sodas and beverages, and desserts. The menu invited guests to visit the curio room, where "Indian and Mexican curios" were offered. Evidently the managers had a hard time keeping employees in this remote spot. Harvey managers continually changed and were "experiencing great difficulty in obtaining and retaining competent help" at the inn, according to the superintendent. Also, Fred Harvey Company was realizing a small profit from the operation. Discussions came up in 1954 to close the concession and raze the building.¹¹⁵

The major problem leading to these discussions was the fact that the walls were cracking: the expanding and contracting layer of bentonite clay that had been first noted when the building was under construction and was documented as causing damage in the guest rooms in 1946 (cracks in the masonry 5" wide appeared on the west side that winter), was by 1950 causing noticeable damage to the Painted Desert Inn. In 1951 a local building contractor inspected the inn, theorizing that the building exhibited downward movement only, lessening the possibility of collapse. The original designer of the inn, Lyle Bennett, wrote that "one of the plumbing fixtures was cracked and may be letting some water escape into the clay formation resulting in expansion and heaving. It is also possible a recent extensive loss from a broken water line in the utility area could have followed a seam underground to the building as such underground seepage has occurred elsewhere." Ironically, Bennett brought up the spectre of demolition of the building he had designed only thirteen years earlier.¹¹⁶

These facts placed the future of the Painted Desert Inn in jeopardy, as the instability of the ground underneath could lead within years to irreversible damage to the building. However, the park soon embarked on a surface repair program that involved patching and painting the cracks on the interior and exterior of the inn. The park hired a "very fine" plasterer who worked from September 1951 to January 1952. The Superintendent wrote in his monthly report at the time:

This is very discouraging work and seems more or less hopeless. Some large cracks in the masonry were repaired about a year ago and now additional cracking has occurred in and near the repair work. Apparently this is a [sic] endless job and I suppose as long as the building is used will have to be done.¹¹⁷

A series of memoranda to the regional director in October 1954 from the monument superintendent and the assistant regional director noted that the roof of the inn also needed repair; a total cost of about \$28,000 was mentioned to repair the building, and then costly future maintenance would be required. The letters questioned the necessity of the concession, noting that the Painted

¹¹⁵Menu in collection, PEFO; Superintendent's Monthly Reports, 1950-58 on managers' turnover, and October 1956.

¹¹⁶Barrett, 101; Cole to Ames, 11; Superintendent's Monthly Reports for March 1946, February and May 1951; Memorandum by Lyle Bennett, May 25, 1951, quoted in Memorandum, Superintendent, Petrified Forest to Regional Director, Southwest Region, July 2, 1965, WRO; "Evaluation of Structures," 23.

¹¹⁷Superintendent's Monthly Reports for September and November 1951, January 1952.

Desert Inn made small profits and drew customers away from private operations on Route 66. Superintendent William E. Branch wrote, "it is not the intention of the Park Service to operate a business like this for the benefit and convenience of the thousands of travellers on Highway 66 and the concession operator, when not needed for the use of monument visitors." He also wrote that "there appears to be no known way to stabilize the foundation of this structure permanently." This proved to be only the beginning of such talk; Fred Harvey's contract was repeatedly given temporary extensions rather than having new documents drawn, and the seed was planted for the idea of replacing the Painted Desert Inn.¹¹⁸

The establishment in 1955 of Mission 66, a ten-year servicewide program of improvements to national parks, monuments, etc., provided Petrified Forest National Park with somewhat of a "wish list" for projects within the park. At first expected to cost \$1,500,000 over the ten-year period, planned improvements included designation of the monument as a national park (accomplished on December 8, 1962), increase in facilities to provide for the needs of some 1,350,000 visitors by 1966, increase in staff, restoration of existing buildings, and additional housing for park staff. Foremost in the plan was a new Painted Desert Visitor Center complex, including administrative offices, visitor services, utility shops, and housing. If restoration funds were to be used, they would not likely be used for the Painted Desert Inn.¹¹⁹

The Fred Harvey Company expressed an interest in relocating to a new building at the Painted Desert in a letter dated November 22, 1957. The next year, representatives of the Park Service, including Thomas C. Vint who had been involved with the original construction of the inn, met with Harvey officials to work out details of the proposed move. The government indicated that the Painted Desert Inn would remain in use as a park interpretive center after being vacated by Fred Harvey, and then possibly be replaced by a structure "similar to Yavapai at Grand Canyon" when funds became available. Harvey's request to be located at the new headquarters was approved by regional staff, and the Fred Harvey Company earmarked \$250,000 for the building. Meanwhile, Harvey's last concession contract was granted extensions without a new contract being accepted. After some five years' delay, the regional office received pressure to give Harvey a twenty-year contract because of the capital investment Harvey would put into the facility.¹²⁰

In the meantime, the Painted Desert Inn saw few improvements during the 1950s. Most noteworthy of these was the installation of a soda fountain and sandwich grill in May 1953. A month earlier, a fire in one of the guest rooms had killed the manager of the inn, although damage to the building was minor. The water pump on the floor of the Painted Desert was replaced in 1951; with the elimination of the sump, water was pumped directly to a storage tank near the inn. The superintendent submitted plans for reroofing the inn in 1954, citing leaks and its "very bad

¹¹⁸Assistant Regional Director Hugh M. Miller to Regional Director, October 4, 1954; Superintendent William E. Branch to Regional Director, Region Three, October 18, 1954; Secretary of the Interior to Speaker of the House Hon. Sam Rayburn, October 25, 1955, PEFO.

¹¹⁹Barrett, 64-65.

¹²⁰Assistant Regional Director Harton L. Bill to Regional Director, November 22, 1957; Superintendent Fred C. Fagergren to Mr. Miller Adams, President, Fred Harvey, April 11 and July 10, 1958; Adams to Fagergren, July 2, 1958; Fagergren to Regional Director, July 15, 1960, PEFO.

condition." Work occurred in November, and the superintendent commented that it "apparently will be water-tight for a long time unless cracked by building settlement." In April 1955 the park's chief ranger moved his office to the information room at the inn, and that November overhead telephone lines replaced worn-out underground lines. An unidentified stairway was redone and the building's exterior painted in 1958, and all LP gas facilities were replaced by electric equipment. The museum remained open during the summer, but closed for good after its exhibits were moved to the newly enlarged Rainbow Forest Museum in 1959. Park maintenance workers installed a handrail between the information room and the shop in May 1960, although no trace of this remains. The exterior concrete stairway to the museum was rebuilt in the late 1950s. In 1960-61 the rim road was realigned to pass through the site of the Painted Desert utility area, leaving the old rim road as the approach to a new Painted Desert Inn parking lot. The old gas station, power house, and garage complex was removed, and the work caused the removal of the inn's service area wall on the south side of the building.¹²¹

At some time in the 1950s, the tap room was closed off from the upper level of the building. The stairway to the tap room was hidden under a temporary floor, framed in level with the trading post floor. This provided additional display space for the concession by creating an "island" out of the stucco stairway walls that sat in the center of the trading post floor. The temporary floor was removed in 1975 and few traces of the alteration can be found.¹²²

Chief architect Dick Sutton, at the request of regional chief of operations, inspected the inn in September 1958, and reported to chief of design and construction Vint:

The structural failure seems to be directly connected with the central portion of the building which incorporated the walls of an existing structure. These walls were constructed of basalt boulders and petrified wood laid up in mud mortar, and pointed with Portland cement mortar. About 50% of the walls were rebuilt when the lodge was constructed in 1939-40. The basic failure was due to the instability of these walls which did not have adequate footings for the clay soil on which they were erected and were not properly bonded to provide integral strength. The additions on the sides and ends of the original structure appear to be reasonably sound except where the superstructure depends on the original walls where settlement has pulled the adjacent walls out of line. If the building is to continue in use or is to be adapted for other purposes, it will have to be stabilized by underpinning and constructing footings and reconstructing the walls in the central part of the building.

¹²¹Brodrick, 35; Barrett, 112-113; administrative files, PEFO; drawing NM-PF 3227, "Painted Desert Developments," dated March 1960, PEFO; Superintendent's Monthly Reports for October 1951, May and December 1953, February, July, August and November 1954, April 1955, March and April 1958, March 1959, May and November 1960; interview with Gene Harper. In December 1953 Park Ranger Clinton G. Harkins received the Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award for heroic action in attempting to save the inn manager from the April 9, 1953, fire. The original superintendent's report on the incident, however, is apparently missing from park files.

¹²²Interview with Gene Harper, February 1992.

While Sutton praised the location of this interpretive facility, he noted the great expense and effort necessary for repairs and recommended that the Painted Desert Inn be razed.¹²³

VII. Painted Desert Inn, 1963-1991

The new Painted Desert headquarters complex was completed and occupied in 1963. The Painted Desert Inn closed its doors, although it continued to be used occasionally for interpretive purposes until 1966. In April 1963 rusty, leaking water lines flooded the basement of the inn; the leaks were repaired, and water service was shut off. The possibility arose that the clay under the building had been saturated for years, further complicating the assessment process. Regional and park managers debated the merits of saving or razing the building for a decade. A park master plan approved in 1960 recommended that the Painted Desert Inn "be adapted or replaced by [an] interpretive center on [the] present site," while a field decision was made in October 1961 to rehabilitate the structure. A later master plan recommended obliteration of the inn. Investigations produced conflicting data, with one inspection finding that there was no significant wall movement in a period of two years and another revealing extensive new damage, including new and enlarged cracks in the trading post room and museum. Then, in 1965, chief architect Jerry A. Riddell of the Western Office of Design and Construction advised that "it would not be economically advisable to rehabilitate this building . . . it is our recommendation that this building be razed and a new Museum be constructed." The writer stressed that new tests of the soil be taken before any new projects are undertaken. In all of these debates, it appears that the historical and architectural significance of the Painted Desert Inn was not taken into account.¹²⁴

Painted Desert Inn was not without supporters, and the public appeared as a driving force in the preservation of the building. In September 1967, park superintendent Donald Dayton received a letter from Mrs. Lyle B. Hill of New York, who "took special note of a bit of man-made beauty, a lovely pink adobe building." Mrs. Hill wrote after her visit, "since this is such a lovely building and seems still to be in quite good repair, we are very interested in knowing just what its future will be. We would also like very much to know what it was used for and why it was closed." Dayton forwarded the letter to the regional director, noting that "we believe that this letter is representative of the thought of many visitors viewing this interesting building," and admitting similar feelings. "This type of architecture and construction is fast becoming a lost art," he wrote; "it may well be considered of historic value a few years hence." Dayton proposed that the inn be rehabilitated as a place to interpret the Indian history of the region, and pointed out that former park service director Horace Albright was reportedly "violently opposed" to demolition of the Inn. Acting regional director George W. Miller replied that "we too have mixed feelings about razing the old structure at

¹²³Chief Architect to Chief of Design and Construction, October 15, 1958, WRO.

¹²⁴Superintendent, Petrified Forest to Regional Director, Southwest Region, July 2, 1965; Regional Director to Chief, WODC, July 9, 1965; Chief Architect, WODC to Assistant Regional Director, Operations, Southwest Region, September 20, 1965, WRO; Development Package Proposal, November 4, 1970, PEFO.

Kachina Point," calling it a "delightful structure." But, Miller warned that the costs would be high and that money was scarce, that funds would not be available for up to five years away. Miller suggested that a new building of the same design be built, and recommended that the Painted Desert Inn remain in place until a decision could be made. Meanwhile, the inn deteriorated, with no water or heat; but the ranger room was open for part of the summer of 1967, offering information and directions to anyone who should stop by.¹²⁵

Fred Harvey officials expressed interest in 1969 to use the Painted Desert Inn again as an Indian handicraft store and snack bar. Harvey was invited to a joint inspection by architects from the region and the San Francisco Service Center, to further determine the structural soundness of the building. The park proposed reopening the inn, with public rest rooms, an information room and museum operated by the park, and a lunch room and craft shop operated by the concessioner. Harvey submitted plans that proposed joint use of the trading post room for concession sales and park museum displays; these were rejected. "With the joint use of the main room as they propose," wrote superintendent Dayton, "the NPS interpretive facilities would merely serve as an attraction to get visitors into the concessioner sales area" ¹²⁶

Only weeks later, a memorandum went from regional director Frank Kowski to the director of the National Park Service, with the results of the last month's inspection and an estimate of \$68,760 for rehabilitating the inn. Kowski recommended razing the inn and restoring the site to a natural state:

Neither the building nor the site lend themselves to the interpretive job which we wish to do in the Painted Desert section of Petrified Forest. A draft of an interpretive prospectus is being reviewed in your office at this moment. Preliminary indications are that the interpreters there agree with us that there is a big job to be done at an overlook into the Painted Desert, but not at the Inn site.

Our participation in this renovation project is estimated to cost \$68,760. This is a considerable investment for a "temporary" situation. All too often temporary solutions live up to the old definition — that in government usage the word temporary has nothing to do with time but only means "unsatisfactory." The interpretive possibilities of that old building are so minor as to be nearly worthless ¹²⁷

¹²⁵Mrs. Lyle B. Hill to Superintendent, September 12, 1967; Superintendent to Regional Director, September 18, 1967; Acting Regional Director to Superintendent, October 5, 1967, WRO and PEFO; Individual Building Data sheet for Painted Desert Inn, April 1969, WRO; Barrett, 102.

¹²⁶Assistant Regional Director to Ben Quinn, April 29, 1969; Superintendent to Regional Architect, August 5, 1969; B. F. Quinn to Donald A. Dayton, August 12, 1969; Superintendent to Regional Director, August 14, 1969, WRO and PEFO.

¹²⁷Regional Director to Director, September 30, 1969, WRO.

In 1970 Petrified Forest National Park was transferred to the Western Region of the National Park Service. On June 29, 1972, western regional director Howard Chapman signed a 10-238 development proposal package to raze the Painted Desert Inn, following the pro-demolition philosophy of his predecessor John Cook. Having inspected the inn and reviewed reports and correspondence from the previous decade, Chapman determined that "the rim above the Painted Desert should be returned to its natural condition. Therefore, the structure is being programmed for demolition at the earliest possible date." The decision was justified by an earlier memo to Chapman from the superintendent of Petrified Forest:

The old Painted Desert Inn, although architecturally pleasing, is situated on the lip of the rim overlooking the Painted Desert wilderness. It thus serves as a subtle but constant reminder to the wilderness hiker of a man-made intrusion being visible from almost any portion of the desert. Additionally, the building outlived its purpose when new concession facilities were constructed at Painted Desert Headquarters. Since abandonment in 1963, apparently due in part to structural weakening, the building requires park maintenance funds to repair the more serious aspects of deterioration such as roof leaks, broken doors, etc.¹²⁸

The park scheduled demolition of the building for Fiscal Year 1975, at an estimated cost of \$114,000. But soon after the 10-238 was submitted, the Washington office requested that an evaluation be made of the Painted Desert Inn that would take into account the historic values of the structure. Apparently this was the first time the theme was formally addressed, and was necessary in compliance with Section 2(b) of Executive Order 11593, May 13, 1971, entitled Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment. William E. Brown, a historian with the southwest region, prepared a two-page document in fall 1972 evaluating the Painted Desert Inn and the two adjacent residences. Brown was to the point about the residences: "In my judgement, these old residences are completely undistinguished and should be razed." But of the inn, Brown was torn in his official duties: "As a historian, I would like to see the place saved. In the role of park manager, I would be dubious about its preservation."¹²⁹

Brown, in addition to noting the structural problems and deterioration after almost a decade of abandonment, attacked the architectural significance of the building:

Aside from in-Service associations of administrative history sort, and the memories of persons who visited the Inn, it has no substantive history that is not duplicated elsewhere, wherever the CCC's built similar facilities. The one criterion of historical value that would

¹²⁸Superintendent to Regional Director, April 10, 1972; Regional Director to Director, July 7, 1972.

¹²⁹Acting Director, Western Region to Superintendent, Petrified Forest, September 19, 1972; William E. Brown, "Summary Field Evaluation: Painted Desert Inn and Adjacent Residences," November 21, 1972, WRO.

motivate preservation is the architectural style and attractiveness of the structure.

As indicated above, under this criterion, the structure is not unique nor is it superior to numerous revival style Pueblo-Spanish structures in Santa Fe and other places in New Mexico. In fact, this style is really not indigenous to this part of Arizona at all. The Rio Grande Valley was the center of historic period Pueblo-Spanish architecture, upon which the revival is based. Nevertheless, in a Southwest regional context, the building fits.

After noting the structural problems with the inn, Brown noted that "everyone not concerned with practical problems is appalled by the idea of the building's demolition. It is very attractive, and an excellent representative of its style." Exercising care in following the "recent rigid directives" from Washington on preservation matters, Brown recommended that a historical architect evaluate the building.¹³⁰

In 1974, Petrified Forest superintendent David Ames and regional director Chapman requested the Historic Preservation Team, Division of Historic Preservation, Western Region, to evaluate the structures at Painted Desert Inn. The team, composed of regional historical architect Robert M. Cox, regional historian Gordon S. Chappell, regional archeologist Roger E. Kelly, and acting chief, Division of Historic Preservation, Thomas D. Mulhern, Jr., traveled to the park that year and completed a detailed report in December 1974. In contention with Brown's findings of two years earlier, the team defended the architectural significance of the building:

Brown is correct in that the adobe Mexican-Pueblo style of flat-roofed architecture featuring vigas and savinos which this building represents is primarily indigenous to the Rio Grande Valley but variations on the basic style are common to other sections of the American Southwest. The stone masonry of the Inn parallels the Arizona Hopi pueblo construction while its plaster coating echoes the New Mexico Rio Grande River Valley adobe and plaster structures.

It should be noted that much 20th Century Pueblo/Mexican Adobe Revival architecture is essentially "phony" — in that the buildings are really of wood frame construction with plastered exteriors faking adobe construction and with interior fake vigas. The Painted Desert Inn is a much purer form of Pueblo/Mexican revival architecture in that all roof vigas and savinos are authentically structural in function. The only exception is the top floor room which serves merely as a cover over the skylight in the trading post, and is of frame construction plastered to match the rest.

¹³⁰Brown, "Summary Field Evaluation."

Pointing out perhaps the fundamental block to making a decision about the building, the report stated that "it is apparent that practically every person who has faced the question of whether to preserve or not to preserve the Inn has been entranced by the building's character and appalled at the thought of demolition, but sufficiently intimidated by practical problems involved to evade the issue and defer a decision until some future date." Attempting to end the eleven-year period of foot-dragging, the regional team concluded the following:

The Division of Historic Preservation, after professional evaluation, strongly recommends retention of the Painted Desert Inn and its rehabilitation for such compatible uses as the Park Administration may program.¹³¹

In December 1974, staff at Petrified Forest prepared a new 10-238, package No. 136, for complete renovation of the Painted Desert Inn. The proposal stated that when completed, the inn "will be the prime interpretive center for the Painted Desert area with an annual visitation of over 1,000,000 visitors." Pending a development concept plan, the proposal called for a new roof, heating plant, plumbing, and rewiring. The next month the regional director, obviously opposed to preservation of the inn, requested that nomination forms be prepared for the National Register of Historic Places. Even if the building would be found eligible, the regional director indicated he would continue to pursue demolition.¹³²

The Historic Preservation Team rapidly completed nomination forms in February 1975. The nomination listed the primary significant values of the inn as: 1) the strict consistency of its architectural style; 2) the manner in which it was constructed; and 3) its characteristics as a representative of regional style of building construction and design. Also, governmental significance, uniqueness, and its relatively unaltered state were stated. For secondary significance, the artistic values of the interior design, including the furnishings and the Kabotie murals, and the local significance of the development of the Painted Desert section of the park were noted. The drive for historic status paid off. The Painted Desert Inn was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 10, 1975.¹³³

Meanwhile, no doubt a result of the renewed interest in the fate of the inn and the determination of its historic significance, staff at Petrified Forest began in early 1975 to prepare the Painted Desert Inn for use as a Bicentennial Travel Center. Jon Erickson, a seasonal ranger at the park supported by the park's cooperating association, took on the project of refurbishing the inn with relish. The young man loved the building and felt strongly about its value and significance. Former park superintendent David Ames credited Erickson with saving the building, referring to Erickson's

¹³¹"Evaluation of Structures," 27-28.

¹³²10-238 in files, WRO and PEFO; Memorandum, S. Hurd to Chapman, et al., January 9, 1975, WRO.

¹³³Historic Preservation Team, Western Region, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form: Painted Desert Inn," February 10, 1975.

championing of the Painted Desert Inn and his enthusiastic nighttime tour of the building with regional director Chapman and thereby winning Chapman's support in early 1975.¹³⁴

Erickson worked with the maintenance crew at the park to clean the building, often putting in extra hours of his own time to the project. A number of alterations occurred to the building in preparation for its use as a Bicentennial Travel Center. Cracked walls were filled and repainted; cracks and falling plaster were especially prominent in the trading post room and the dining room. Portions of the Kabotie murals were touched up; a park maintenance worker recalled repainting the hills in one mural. Many of the concrete floors with scored Indian blanket designs, painted gray during the Fred Harvey era, were painted with a red, white, and blue motif; a Native American maintenance worker later returned the floor colors to a more appropriate coloring. A double door between the kitchen and the dining room was closed in with framing and sheetrock, creating a flat wall surface in the dining room; the kitchen side of the barrier was not paneled. The temporary floor covering the tap room stairs was removed and the stairway restored to use. Protective plywood was removed from the window openings and necessary repairs made. A contractor installed wrought-iron grill work in the interior door openings and on the stairway to the tap room; these acted as security doors and were closed with padlocks. Workers installed a partition in the ranger room, creating a work area a few feet behind the information desk. The Petrified Forest Museum Association donated funds for electrical and telephone service.

The Petrified Forest National Park Bicentennial Travel Center opened to the public on a limited basis in spring 1975. By that summer, museum exhibits, featuring the Fred Harvey Collection of Indian arts and crafts, had been installed and the Painted Desert Inn was once again open on a regular basis to the public. On June 23, 1976, the dining room was dedicated as the Kabotie Room, with the artist in attendance. National Park Service conservators stabilized the murals in May and June 1977.¹³⁵

Because of shortages in park staff, volunteers met visitors at the Painted Desert Inn; during the Bicentennial Celebration in June and July 1976, the park superintendent invited retired NPS employees to act as VIP hosts to staff the building and relate their experiences with the Park Service to visitors. One, Luis Gastellum, recalled that "the visitor was frequently more interested in finding out about the design of the building and knowing about who constructed it than of the area itself . . . the striking and different type of structure represented at this site creates an immediate impression on the visitor and he is anxious to learn more about it." After the Bicentennial, the Painted Desert Inn remained open during the summers as an information center and museum with changing exhibits; the realities of the structural condition of the inn continued to loom over the heads of park management.¹³⁶

¹³⁴David Ames to Gary Cummins (relating to Erickson's untimely death), September 25, 1991, PEFO.

¹³⁵Holbrook Tribune-News, March 27, 1975; administrative files, PEFO; "Painted Desert Inn Chronology," MS, PEFO; interviews with Johnny Johnson and Bobby Morris, PEFO.

¹³⁶Holbrook Tribune-News, March 27, 1975; Luis Gastellum to Gary Everhardt, Director, National Park Service, June 24, 1976.

Major work occurred in 1979-80, including a complete rewiring by contract and converting the restrooms for handicapped accessibility in 1979. In spring 1980, a major rehabilitation of the upstairs, including replastering and painting, was performed. Around this time more ornamental wrought-iron grillwork was added to the building for security reasons; the inn had been broken into on several occasions. Every exterior window and door opening had a grating installed, firmly bolted to the structure. Other repair issues raised at the time included the uneven and potentially unsafe flagstone pavements, where it was recommended to carefully remove the stones, add a reinforced concrete base and replace the flagstones in a more level manner. This occurred around 1984, but without adequate attention to the original flagstone patterns. Proposals were written in 1979 and 1980 to have any deteriorated log vigas replaced and a new roof installed, as well as a security system, plastering and painting, and heating improvements. Also, asbestos removal would have to be performed. A fire and intrusion alarm system was installed under contract by D-CO Inc. of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1979 but failed to work properly. Final payment was withheld from the contractor, and the system never operated.¹³⁷

In 1986 Laura Soullière Harrison, architectural historian in the southwest region, prepared nomination forms as part of the "Architecture in the Parks" National Historic Landmark Theme Study. Harrison described the unique qualities of the inn:

The artistry of this building sets it apart from other Spanish-pueblo Revival buildings. The interior spaces have unusually high qualities of design, particularly the former Trading Post Room illuminated by a translucent skylight with multiple panes of glass painted in designs of prehistoric pueblo pottery. The murals by the late Hopi artist Fred Kabotie are exceptional, and may be the last murals Kabotie ever painted.¹³⁸

The Painted Desert Inn was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987, and then included in the Secretary's 1988 and 1989 annual reports to Congress on Damaged and Threatened National Historic Landmarks as priority 1, the highest level of damage and threat. As a result, between 1988 and 1990, major work was performed, including: a new heating system, which involved building a small, secure room in the basement for the controls and leaving the original boiler room practically empty; complete asbestos removal; a new roof; plastering and painting. Movements in the structure have been monitored through the installation of six dial gauges that measure the width of cracks and any change in width over the years.

In 1990 the inn was reopened to the public on a seasonal basis as a visitor center, with a full-time ranger and volunteers on duty, and a sales area for the Petrified Forest National Park Association in the tap room. In 1992 the inn opened throughout the winter. As one of the prominent cultural attractions of the park, the inn is seen by visitors who can explore the history of the building,

¹³⁷Administrative files, PEFO; Chief Ranger Chris L. Address to Mr. Art Judd, D-CO Inc., June 11, 1970, PEFO; interviews with Gene Harper and Terry Maze.

¹³⁸Laura Soullière Harrison, *Architecture in the Parks: National Historic Landmark Theme Study* (Washington: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1986), 15.

examine the architecture and decoration (original furniture is on display in the dining room, where a section has been cordoned off with wood stanchions), view special exhibits and Indian craftspeople at work, purchase books and curios, and enjoy the unsurpassed views of the Painted Desert.

VIII. Sources of Information

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IX. Project Information

The Painted Desert Inn 1992 HABS recording Project at the Petrified Forest National Park, Apache County, Arizona, was co-sponsored by the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, Thomas Mulhern, Chief, Division of Park Historic Preservation; the Denver Service Center, Western Team, Paul Cloyd, Historical Architect; and the Petrified Forest National Park, Gary Cummins, Superintendent. The project was undertaken by the National Park Service, Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, Robert J. Kapsch, chief, Paul D. Dolinsky, chief of HABS, Joseph D. Balachowski, project leader. The documentation was produced on site by supervisory architect Jorge L. Sein, architect; foreman Patrick B. Guthrie (California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo); architectural technicians Sarah C. Ball (through US/ICOMOS, Great Britain), Margaret A. Haas (Miami University of Ohio), and Manuel E. Skow (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University).

This historical report was prepared by Dewey Livingstone (then of Point Reyes National Seashore, now of Golden Gate National Recreation Area) for the Denver Service Center for use in the Historic Structure Report. The report was edited in the HABS office by Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian.